

LABOUR PARTY IN LIVERPOOL

Full reports and analysis >>Pages 3,4&5, 10&11

Unions block what members want >>Page 4



Socialist Worker

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MAY'S VERMIN GATHER FOR CONFERENCE...

DUMP TORY TRASH



ANTI-FASCISM

Tommy Robinson is a fascist threat, join protests

ANTI-RACISTS WERE set to protest at the retrial of Nazi figurehead Tommy Robinson on Thursday.

The case marks the beginning of a series of important battles.

If Robinson is released it will boost every fascist and racist in Britain and internationally.

>>Page 20

THE SATANIC VERSES



Islamophobia, free speech and Salman Rushdie

THIRTY YEARS ago this week publishers released Salman Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses*.

Within weeks he found himself at the centre of a storm of outrage from Muslims.

The affair fed the growth of what we now call Islamophobia.

>>Pages 14&15

HOUSING

Tories promise more cash to housing fat cats

THE TORIES' latest housing announcement is smoke and mirrors.

Some £2 billion of "new money" has been promised.

But it isn't available until 2022—under the next government. And the cash will go to housing associations.

>>Page 6



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'My strategy is to litter my career with so many decoy mistakes, nobody knows which one to attack'

Tory toff **Boris Johnson** explains his political strategy

'Domestic chaos'

The **Daily Mail** on 'news' that many people don't know what they will cook most days

'A bit John le Carre'

Labour's deputy leader **Tom Watson** on claims that the state is preventing a Corbyn-led government

'Dead as a dodo'

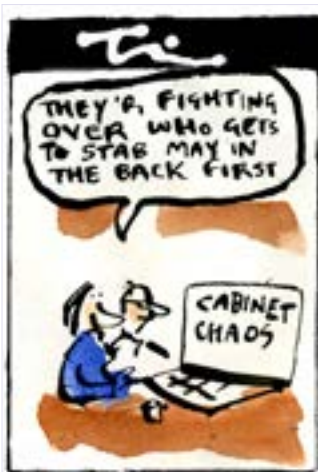
Ex-minister **Sir Mike Penning** on Theresa May's Chequers Brexit plan

'The Tories need to wake up or housing will sink them'

The **Sun** fears the impact of anger at the housing crisis

'We should borrow billions, build affordable homes on public land and sell them at a profit for the Treasury'

The **Sun** is so scared, it even backs nationalised house-building



Infected blood inquiry must hold guilty Tories to account

AN INQUIRY into the contaminated blood scandal began on Monday of this week. Nearly 5,000 people were infected with HIV and Hepatitis C after being given blood transfusions during the late 1970s and 1980s. More than 2,800 have died.

Governments knew that the blood, from the US, was unsafe but accepted it because it was cheap.

There's even evidence that contaminated blood was deliberately given to patients to test its "infectivity".

Former Tory prime minister John Major could be called to give evidence after he was named in a dossier of people campaigners say have questions to answer.

The dossier names five former Tory health secretaries—Kenneth Clarke, Virginia Bottomley, Norman Fowler, William Waldegrave and John Moore.

Ten other prominent politicians are also named, many of whom held senior positions in the governments of Margaret Thatcher and Major.

Documents leaked last year showed that Margaret Thatcher's government



had a deliberate policy of refusing to accept any responsibility for the scandal.

Ministers also tried to limit the government's financial liability to victims. Moore wrote a memo in November 1987 advocating a "once-and-for-all" payment to victims.

He said this would be "particularly attractive as it minimises government intervention—and would be consistent with the policy of not accepting any direct responsibility".

The inquiry will this week hear three days of opening statements from inquiry chair Sir Brian Langstaff,

lawyers representing victims and other core participants. It is already mired in controversy.

Victims have accused ministers of breaking a promise made earlier this year to pay their legal fees.

Law firm Collins Solicitors said it hadn't received any funding from the government despite claiming thousands of pounds.

Des Collins from the firm said it had been told it will only be paid for 16 percent of the claim. "If you were going to be cynical about it, you would say that's a deliberate ploy," he said.

Victims have also said time restrictions have denied them the chance to tell their stories. Some lawyers have been allocated just five seconds per victim.

Just seven victims will be able to speak for 15 minutes or have their statements read out.

The scandal exposed the horrifying contempt that those at the top of society have for ordinary people. The inquiry must not cover up their stories—and must hold those responsible to account.

PLENTY OF headlines for Coca-Cola are interested in developing drinks infused with cannabis. What many didn't point out is that the consumer will be conned.

The firm plans to add CBD to add to the fizzy drinks. In large doses that is part of medicinal cannabis. In the doses in lifestyle drinks it will have no effect at all. The real thing it won't be.



THE QUEEN wants someone to look after the horses that pull her ceremonial carriages.

The candidate must have experience of stable management and be a "highly capable and confident rider".

And for that they'll get just £21,400 a year.

Tories in a U-turn over conference hologram

IT WOULD have at least woken up those who were nodding off at the back. But Jeremy Wright, the culture secretary, has axed plans to give his speech to the Tory conference as a hologram.

The idea was ruled out amid fears it could so easily become "an embarrassing fiasco".

What journalists like to refer to as "sources" said, "Last year we couldn't even manage to keep letters in place on a backdrop behind the prime minister as she gave her

speech to conference, so there was absolutely no bloody way we were going to allow a relatively new minister appearing as a hologram to take centre stage. It had disaster written all over it."

Tories hope to avoid the disasters that bedevilled Theresa May's speech last time.

The slogan for May's big moment is likely to be projected onto the backdrop after magnetic letters fell off last year.

And the stage is high up to avoid storming incidents.



Jeremy Wright

Cops' dog that killed pensioner had form

COPS HAVE been slammed by a jury after a police dog attacked a pensioner who later died.

Irene Collins died after she was repeatedly bitten by the dog, Dano.

She was attacked in her kitchen by the seven-stone German Shepherd.

She died days after suffering bites to her arm, leg and breast, and a broken arm at her home in 2014.

Dano's handler PC Mark Baines had managed to get the dog to release Irene but it

escaped and returned to bite again.

The inquest at Teesside Magistrates' Court concluded that she died from natural causes "contributed to by the consequences of

the dog bites while the dog was out of control".

The inquest jury criticised the Thames Valley and Hampshire force as well.

The force sold the dog to Cleveland Police for £500 without disclosing that Dano had already bitten ten people, including one in the face.



Cops' racism is just 'banter'

COPS ARE having to be trained on how not to offend people. The force in Leicestershire is running "banter training".

It follows "questions from the workforce about what is acceptable and what isn't".

But cops won't be forced to stop being offensive—the course is voluntary.

And it's not clear that it will even take much of a stand against racist and sexist drivel, as it aims to put "political correctness in its place".

One cop told the **Sun** newspaper, "Banter is part and parcel of the police force."

"It gets you through the stress and trauma of the things you deal with."

FIGURE IT OUT

2.8%

the percentage of profits paid by Starbucks in tax last year

£162MILLION

how much profit it made

19%

the low rate of corporation tax in Britain they are supposed to pay

Fewer young women happy

THE NUMBER of girls and young women in Britain who say they are happy has plummeted, according to a survey.

The Girlguiding survey found that just a quarter of girls and women between the ages of seven and 21 said they were "very happy". The figure in 2009 was 41 percent.

Two thirds don't feel safe outside their homes or know someone who is scared walking home alone. More than half said they had suffered harassment or knew someone who had.

More young women had experienced unkind, threatening and negative behaviour online compared to five years ago.

Compared to a survey three years ago, more girls aged between seven and ten think "naked pictures of women in the media, jokes about girls and more attention given to women's clothes than actions" affects how they are treated.

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Labour remains divided over second Brexit vote

by **NICK CLARK** at the Labour Party conference in Liverpool

DELEGATES AT the Labour conference were set to vote on a motion that edges the party closer to supporting a second Brexit referendum on Tuesday.

The motion boosted the Labour leadership's position of pressuring the Tories into a general election over their Brexit deal.

But it opened the door to supporting the People's Vote campaign. "If we cannot get a general election Labour must support all options remaining on the table, including campaigning for a public vote," it said.

The motion was designed to paper over disagreements in the Labour Party.

It revealed splits about whether a future referendum should include an option to remain in the European Union (EU).

Shadow Brexit secretary Keir Starmer went further than the motion. "Our options must include campaigning for a public vote and nobody is ruling out Remain as an option," he said.

That could mean effectively a second referendum—the position much of big business has been agitating for.

In the debate Unite union deputy general secretary Steve Turner raised legitimate concerns about Starmer's position.

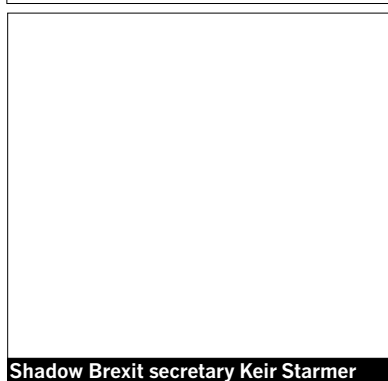
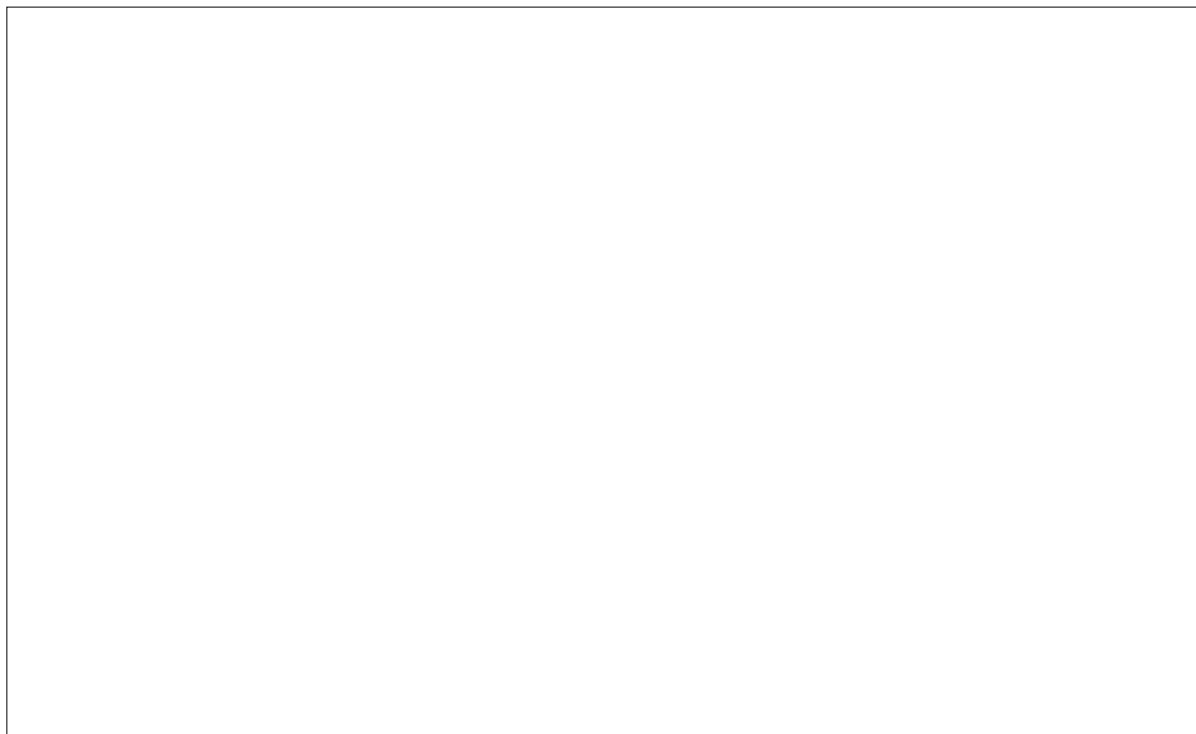
Departure

"Despite what Keir may have said earlier it's a public vote on the terms of our departure," he said.

"And that is not a second referendum."

Delegate Gemma Bolton said, "Our party leadership have said we're not calling for another referendum.

"We all know how divisive the first referendum was. Do you honestly



Shadow Brexit secretary Keir Starmer

think a second will achieve anything different?"

The motion on Tuesday was the result of months of pressure on Labour's left wing leadership.

Most of them see it as a step towards remaining in the racist,

SOME LABOUR MPs and union leaders marched for a second referendum on Brexit outside the party conference

neoliberal EU. But it was supported by some left wing groups and trade union leaders who see the EU as a progressive option to protect jobs and oppose racism.

Contrast

In contrast Labour's leadership had failed to argue for a left wing vision for Brexit.

A second referendum offers no alternative to the Tories and EU's austerity and racism.

Unite union member Aidan told Socialist Worker, "Calls for a second referendum bind you to a binary choice.

"I think instead we should have a general election. That gives people a lot more choice and some hope as

well." The motion was a fudge that doesn't bind Labour to definitely supporting a second referendum.

The leadership rightly wants to focus on pushing the Tories into a general election instead.

But right wing MPs will use it to pressure the leadership into calling for a second referendum with an option to remain.

The only way to resist them is to offer an alternative, left wing version of Brexit.

This would call for an end to privatisation, racism and austerity.

What's your story?

Email with your ideas
reports@socialistworker.co.uk

IN BRIEF

Labour shifts over academies

A LABOUR government would end the Tories' free schools and academies programmes.

Shadow education secretary Angela Rayner told the party's conference, "We will use our time in government to bring all publicly funded schools back into the mainstream public sector."

This is a shift. Labour's general election manifesto had said it would only stop new free schools.

But other bits of the speech were less decisive. Rayner said that Labour would "allow academies to return to local authority control".

And she said parents could still set up their own "co-operative schools as part of the local schools family".

Benefits fudge sparks anger

DISABILITY campaigners are angry at Labour's failure to pledge to scrap the hated Universal Credit (UC) benefit.

Shadow benefits minister Margaret Greenwood announced that the party would hold a year-long review of benefits if elected.

Yet UC is a mechanism for punishing the poor—and it needs to be urgently stopped.

Paula Peters is a Disabled People Against Cuts and Unite Community activist.

"While they keep talking, claimants are dying, being made homeless and going hungry," she told Socialist Worker.

The Unite union and the TUC union federation call for "stop and scrap" of UC.

Paula said Labour's failure to do so "felt like a huge slap in the face".

Socialist Worker Appeal to raise £125,000

Socialist Worker is the voice of people fighting for a better world. It dispels the racist scapegoating and anti-working class rhetoric of the mainstream press.

We publish stories of the strikes, protests and pickets that can beat back the bosses and bigots. We are asking everyone who enjoys Socialist Worker to donate as much as they can and help fund the resistance.

I SUPPORT THE APPEAL BECAUSE...

Tories and their crony profiteers use Pride marches to make a fast buck.

Socialist Worker has always seen through the commercialisation, arguing that Pride should be a



Nicola Field

protest against continuing LGBT+ oppression.

It's an organising tool that links all struggles against bigotry and exploitation together.

Nicola Field
Founding member Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners

To donate go to socialistworker.co.uk/appeal

Call 020 7840 5620 or send a cheque, payable to 'SW Appeal' to PO Box 74955, London E16 9EJ



More online

Read our full coverage of the Labour Party conference at socialistworker.co.uk

● Jeremy Corbyn rally draws thousands on eve of Labour Party conference
bit.ly/LiverpoolRally

● Labour divided over justice for Palestine
bit.ly/PalestineDivide

● Labour conference fringe meeting sets out challenges for anti-racists
bit.ly/AntiRacismFringe

● Trade unions vote down democratic changes
bit.ly/unionsrules



Union votes block what members want from Labour

by NICK CLARK in Liverpool

A DEBATE over party rules at Labour's annual conference on Sunday saw ordinary party members hammer MPs and clash with trade union leaders.

Much of the anger focused on a proposed change that could make it even harder for a left wing candidate to stand in a future leadership election. Members also wanted new rules that would help them hold their MPs to account.

But votes by trade union delegates made sure the members were defeated.

Current rules say that to make it onto the ballot paper, a leadership candidate has to be nominated by 10 percent of MPs or MEPs—something Corbyn only just managed. Many members want that threshold to be lowered.

But the union vote at conference means the party will keep the higher threshold.

The change passed means a candidate will also need nominations from either 5 percent of Constituency Labour Parties (CLPs) or 5 percent of affiliated organisations—mostly unions.

But ordinary Labour members from CLPs were overwhelmingly against it. Charlotte Austin, youth delegate from Bishop Auckland CLP, said, “Under the proposals we are voting on today, a candidate like Jeremy Corbyn would have an even greater struggle to be on the ballot.”

Many delegates hoped to pass changes that would mean MPs face reselection votes automatically. Again the union vote meant the weaker change went through.

Ferhat Cinar from Hackney North and Stoke Newington said, “This is not just about a rule change. This is about rejecting right wing policies, the Tory agenda and the establishment onslaught against Jeremy's leadership and a future socialist government.” Union delegates wanted to present the trade unions as allies of ordinary Labour members against the entrenched power of the MPs.

BACK STORY

The row over democracy touches on who holds power in Labour

● Union leaders founded Labour to deliver reforms, but within the limits of the system

● Unions and MPs together have more power in Labour than members

● Labour's focus on parliament means wider struggles come second

● The demands of ordinary members are limited by the structures

Yet votes by trade union delegates—just a handful overall—made sure that members' hopes for a more democratic party were thwarted.

Ordinary Labour members voted overwhelmingly against how the debate was organised, demanding more time to read the rule change proposals.

But votes by affiliated organisations meant they were defeated.

Voting power is divided so that although affiliates have many fewer delegates than CLPs, their votes carry much more weight.

A handful of trade union leaders can defeat hundreds of Labour Party members from CLPs.

The full break down of the rule change votes was set to be released as Socialist Worker went to press.

But the results suggest that union leaders lined up against ordinary Labour members.

For longer reports of Labour Party conference, visit bit.ly/LabourConf18

DELEGATES LISTENING to the conference debates

PICTURE: PA

Determined to keep standing with the Palestinians

Support for Palestine

OVER 250 Labour Party members showed they are determined to keep standing in solidarity with the Palestinians, at a fringe meeting hosted by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC).

It demonstrated there was a mood among Labour delegates to hit back at attempts to silence support for Palestine and criticism of Israel.

Hugh Lanning from the PSC said, “If you pass racist laws, if you operate in a racist way, there is nothing wrong in calling you a racist state.”

Len McCluskey, leader of the Unite union, told the meeting that anyone who thought Labour's antisemitism definition was “going to silence us from supporting the Palestinian cause, or silence us from calling Israel

what it is—an apartheid state—they are very much mistaken.”

Yet McCluskey was one of the forces behind the pressure put on Labour's leadership to accept the definition.

The Labour right showed how they will continue to use Labour's definition to attack the left and anyone who criticises Israel.

At a fringe meeting for the Jewish Labour Movement, MPs lined up to attack Corbyn and call for expulsions.

Many made it clear they wouldn't tolerate opposition to Israel's “right” to exist as a Jewish state that discriminates against Palestinians.

The best way to respond to the attacks is to argue why it's right to call Israel a racist state.

Debating fascism

LABOUR PARTY members debated the rise of racism and fascism at a Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) fringe meeting.

Shadow home secretary Diane Abbott blamed governments and politicians for stoking racism—such as the Tories' “hostile environment” for migrants policy.

“You really shouldn't be a sucker to the myth that migrants drive down wages”.

Yet she said Labour would have “criteria for the type of migration we want to have”.

This is a dangerous concession to the false idea that there are some industries where migration is a threat to pay and conditions. It can feed an impression that there are “good” and “bad” migrants.

Others said the best way to challenge the growth of the far right was to organise a mass anti-racist movement.

SUTR convenor Weyman Bennett said, “Our job is to get all the people the Nazis hate together in a unified way and march against them. If we can do that, we can defeat the Nazis.”

Crowd is ready for Tory fight at rally for Corbyn

THOUSANDS turned out on the eve of Labour's conference to welcome leader Jeremy Corbyn to the Liverpool.

The crowd included people of all ages and there was an exuberant mood.

Chants of, “Oh, Jeremy Corbyn,” regularly erupted among the crowd.

Corbyn said Labour's changes would also be about “democracy”.

“We will have democracy in the running of industries, in newspapers and at the workplace,” he said.

Corbyn was introduced as “the next prime minister of a socialist Britain”.

And several others referred to him as the next prime minister.

But he will have to fight to win a general election against attacks from the Tories, the bosses, the press and the right in his own party. And



Thousands waiting for Corbyn

it won't mean Britain becomes socialist.

There was a genuine optimism and a mood that the left is strong, despite constant attacks from the right both inside and outside the party.

Corbyn told the crowd that the more the right attacks “the stronger we are”.

But activists did acknowledge that right wing attacks on Corbyn are damaging.

“It's good to have Corbyn as leader, but

it can feel like local groups are run by the right,” new party member Rebecca told Socialist Worker.

The rally showed enthusiasm for left wing ideas and for a fight against the Tories. But a Labour government will come under enormous pressure. Electing Corbyn would be a slap in the face for the bosses—but it will also be the start of a huge battle about how society is run.

Right aren't making progress

EVERYONE was anxious about something or another at the Labour right's conference rally on Monday night.

Some MPs were anxious about losing their jobs.

Ian Austin MP was simply anxious the party was left wing.

“It makes my blood boil,” he said, that anyone could criticise Tony Blair's government.

But really he was anxious about the strength of left wing members in the party.

In a bizarre final rant he finished, “Some of them might

from the Labour right.

But mostly he was anxious too. “The party is in a very, very worrying place,” he said. “Momentum and the hard left have what looks like hegemonic power.”

There was talk of organising, defending MPs—even recruiting supporters from among the new members.

The problem was, none of them really knew how to do it.

As one speaker said, “The trouble with the Labour Party is that anyone who joins us, we're suspicious of them.”

Scottish independence blow

SCOTTISH Labour leader Richard Leonard crushed hopes that Labour might improve its position on Scottish independence.

He told the conference that not only does the party oppose independence but that it will seek to

block a further vote on the issue.

Days earlier Jeremy Corbyn said he would not rule out giving the Scottish Government the power to hold an independence referendum if he became prime Minister.

This would at least

offer some concession to those who like Corbyn's radical policies but want independence.

Instead Leonard has lined up even more with the unionists.

March for Independence Saturday 6 October, 12 noon, Johnston Terrace, Edinburgh

Socialist Worker
WHAT WE THINK

HOW DO WE GET REAL WORKERS' DEMOCRACY?

SHADOW chancellor John McDonnell has enraged the Tories and the right wing press by announcing plans to nationalise the water industry, rail and other utilities.

Speaking at Labour's conference, he said the party was “planned, ready and prepared” for a programme of nationalisation if it won a general election.

It's welcome that the Labour leadership is talking about nationalisation.

Taking vital services out of the clutches of profiteering bosses and putting them back into public ownership would be a good thing.

McDonnell also pledged that Labour would give workers representation on company boards.

This proposed measure, he claimed, would give local councils, workers and customers a say in how companies are run.

He added, “We'll be proud to call that future socialism.”

But workers' ability to make decisions would ultimately be controlled by the fact that wider society would still be organised for profit.

Real power would remain in

the hands of the tiny handful of rich people.

Socialism is a more fundamental change than workers having a minority say in their exploitation.

It would see ordinary people take charge of production and society. Instead of being run to help a few make profit, society would be run to meet the needs of everyone.

Workers democratically organising their workplaces as part of a wider democracy is a key part of any future socialist society.

They already understand the best way to run a workplace and don't need managers telling them

“Rail, water and energy bosses won't give up their companies without a fight

what to do, or bosses skimming off profits.

Socialism would mean that, as part of a broader plan, education workers would decide what happens in school, NHS workers would vote on hospital decisions and so on.

McDonnell is right to argue, “It's time to shift the balance of power in our country. It's time to give people back control over their lives.”

But that balance of power will not be changed by a Labour government deciding so—but by ordinary people fighting for it.

Rail, water and energy bosses won't give their companies up without a fight. They will use the media and financial scares.

Socialists need to be part of building a movement of working class people that can challenge the power of the bosses.

If workers are confident enough to run a workplace for themselves they can also think the same about wider society.

That means going beyond token measures and really controlling production.

Workers' control and democracy would truly mean, “For the many, not the few.”

STATE IS A REAL THREAT

LABOUR'S DEPUTY leader Tom Watson tried to belittle claims that the spooks were out to undermine Jeremy Corbyn as a “bit John le Carre”.

Andrew Murray, Corbyn's adviser, had written about the possibility ahead of the party's conference last week.

Pointing out the dangerous role of the state isn't the stuff of spy novels.

In 2015 a senior serving general said “people would use whatever means possible, fair

or foul” to stop Corbyn's old policy of dumping Trident nuclear weapons.

There isn't going to be a coup the day after a Corbyn victory.

Bosses will resort to methods such as investment strikes or a run on the pound to force Labour to abandon left wing policies.

But the general's remarks showed how far the ruling class would be willing to go to protect their interests.

That's because the state is not a neutral apparatus controlled by

democratically-elected politicians.

It is a capitalist state that looks out for the bosses' interests. That means the movement can't rely on manoeuvres at the top to defend itself.

Murray was right that we'd need “the mobilisation of the mass of people as we did in the 2003” against war to block the bosses.

And we'd need to go further—with mass strikes and mobilisations to change the balance of power for good.

PROTEST AT THE TORY PARTY CONFERENCE

**11AM, SATURDAY 29 SEPTEMBER
VICTORIA SQUARE, BIRMINGHAM
CALLED BY TUC MIDLANDS AND
THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY
DETAILS AT [BIT.LY/BHAMTORYDEMO](http://bit.ly/BHAMTORYDEMO)**



ANALYSIS

TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS



Go beyond the false 'choices' over Brexit

THE DAILY Express newspaper declared it was Theresa May's "finest hour" as she defended her Chequers deal on Brexit last weekend.

By Monday it was checkmate for the prime minister.

Whatever the outcome of Tory infighting, she has run out of room to outmanoeuvre her enemies.

A majority of senior ministers were reported on Monday to back a "Canada+" alternative to the Chequers plan. This came on top of mounting pressure from right wing Brexiteers on the back benches.

And it's not just the home front May has to worry about. Her Chequers proposals were savaged at the Salzburg summit by the rulers of the racist, neoliberal EU last week.

Without the support of her cabinet, May will find it hard to put the Chequers deal to MPs before Britain leaves the European Union (EU) in March. If MPs voted against her proposals, she could face a general election.

The left should seize on these divisions to boot out the whole Tory regime of austerity and racism.

That requires upping resistance in workplaces and the streets now, not waiting for the next general election in the hope of a Labour government. And that movement must unite working class people who backed both Remain and Leave. But the left and labour movement can't avoid taking an attitude towards Brexit itself.

The substance of the row between a Chequers or Canada+ deals are born out of a row within the Tory party.

Brexit has torn the Tories between two sources of their support—big business and bigotry.

The banks and big business are desperate to remain in the EU's single market because it protects their profits. But the Tories tried to make a play for right wing voters by promising to dump freedom of movement for EU migrants.

The options of a "soft Brexit" vs a "hard Brexit", a deal or no-deal Brexit are false choices for working class people. So long as the Tories remain in office, all of these options will be based on austerity and racism.

Hardwired

The Chequers deal seeks to maintain the free market policies that are hardwired into the EU's single market. These include competition rules that block the nationalisation of whole industries or running them as public services.

Tory planning documents for a no-deal Brexit have made clear they would still seek to keep the rules.

A Canada+ deal would break from the single market but—as May has repeatedly pointed out—it would mean checks at Britain's borders.

Big business is enraged at such costly obstacles. And such a deal also offers no solution to the question of the Irish border after Brexit.

Meanwhile, the various alternatives being proposed by the Brexiteers are no better. Former minister Boris Johnson and David Davis' alternative plan was cooked up by the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) think tank.

The IEA was a leading supporter of Margaret Thatcher. It pushes for slashing workers' rights and health and safety regulations, slashing the environment and selling off public services for profit.

Outrage at the reactionaries leading the charge for Brexit has led sections of the left to back calls for a People's Vote. Some of its supporters want to defend free movement, fight the far right and stop big business profiting more from public services.

But those leading the People's Vote campaign are right wing liberals who defend the rotten status quo.

We can't allow opposition to the Tories to come together behind a defence of the establishment. And we have to argue against the patronising and dangerous idea that most working class people who voted Leave are racist.

A recent nationwide survey ranked towns according to attitudes towards immigration. One of the most non-racist places was Leave-voting, working class Wolverhampton.

Lining up behind calls for a People's Vote would mean saying the left and anti-racists had nothing to say to them.

There is an alternative that cuts across the Leave/Remain divide with class politics. That means fighting for a left wing, anti-racist vision of Brexit that's in the interests of working class people.

Tories promise more cash to housing association fat cats

A pledge of £2 billion 'new money' for housing is a sneaky move that commits the Tories to nothing, says **Alistair Farrow**

THE TORIES' latest housing announcement is smoke and mirrors.

Some £2 billion of "new money" has been promised.

Theresa May announced the new policy at the conference of the National Housing Federation—the body that represents housing associations.

But the cash isn't available until 2022, which means it would be the next government that brings the change in. And no government can be bound to introduce a policy by the previous one.

On top of this, there is real doubt about where the £2 billion would come from.

The Tories have said it is separate from the £9 billion currently committed to the Affordable Homes Programme until 2022.

But there was no information on what level of funding the post-2022 programme would receive, or what proportion of it the £2 billion would make up.

And the "new money" will go to housing associations.

Charge

These are increasingly behaving like private firms—building homes for sale rather than for rent. When they do rent homes out they charge huge amounts.

Polly Neate, chief executive of housing charity Shelter, wrote after the latest announcement, "Last year,



HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS are increasingly building homes for sale, not rent (main) and Labour's John Healey (left) needs a more radical policy to deal with the crisis

begged central government to loosen restrictions on council borrowing for building council homes.

"You asked for government support. You have it," May told delegates on Wednesday.

"Now it is your turn to act, building the homes we need and challenging the attitudes that hold us back."

She said, "For many people, a certain stigma still clings to social housing."

Most Tories fall into that group—from May herself who ran away from Grenfell survivors to David Cameron who singled out "100 slum estates" for demolition.

What's Labour's alternative? In response to May's speech shadow housing

minister John Healey hailed "Labour's plans to build a million genuinely affordable homes, including the biggest council house-building programme for more than 30 years."

Half of these will be council or housing association.

Healey has also promised £200 million of grants and £4 billion in borrowing guarantees for smaller housing associations.

Labour needs a really radical alternative—a million council homes in five years, rent controls and democratic planning.

Got a story?
Email ideas to reports@socialistworker.co.uk

Grenfell anger pushes council back

A STORM of anger last week forced Kensington and Chelsea council to back down from an attack on people affected by the Grenfell Tower fire.

People who had been living in the shadow of the Tower until the fire in June 2017 were told on Wednesday they must move back into their homes.

If they did not, the council threatened, they would lose their council tenancies.

"If you do not feel able to return home you will have to end your council



tenancy," read the letter.

But, under pressure, the council backed down.

Joe Delaney is one of the 80 people affected.

"People are more than willing to go back, but they can't because their homes are still not safe" he said.

"The council has had months to sort this out and they've done nothing."

"They continue to manage a PR disaster."

"But they're forgetting about the humanitarian one for which they are at least partly responsible, and are making worse through their actions."

FIGURE IT OUT

80 people—the number affected by the latest threat from Kensington and Chelsea council

72 people—the official number of people who died in the Grenfell Tower fire

0 people—the number of people who have been held accountable for the disaster

Report puts migrants at risk, but smashes myths

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

A TORY-COMMISSIONED report into immigration is a huge threat to European Union (EU) migrants.

If its recommendations were implemented, three quarters of EU workers in Britain wouldn't have been eligible to come, according to the Institute for Public Policy Research.

The Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) report is a nasty attack on working class people that aims to split migrants into "good" and "bad".

It recommends that the government make it easier for "higher-skilled" migrants to come here than "lower-skilled" workers.

Underlying this is an assumption that "lower-skilled" workers are a problem. The MAC complains, "With free movement there can be no guarantee that migration is in the interests of UK residents."

Yet its own report blows these racist myths apart.

Right wingers claim that migrants both steal jobs and live a life on benefits.

Yet the MAC concluded that there is "little or no overall impact of immigration on the level of employment or unemployment of existing workers".

The report looked at the impact of immigration from the European Economic Area on Britain's labour market between 1983 and 2017.

The ratio of working age EU migrants to working age UK-born people rose from 1.3 percent to 7.9 percent during this time.

During the same period "the employment rate for the working age UK-born population increased from 63.9 percent to 74.8 percent".

And the unemployment rate fell from 11 percent to 4.3 percent.

So migrants don't take jobs from people born in Britain.

Benefits

And they aren't a drain on the system either. The MAC report said, "EU migrants pay more in taxes than they receive in benefits."

It found that in 2016-17 "EU migrants as a whole are estimated to have paid £4.7 billion more in taxes than they received in welfare payments and public services".

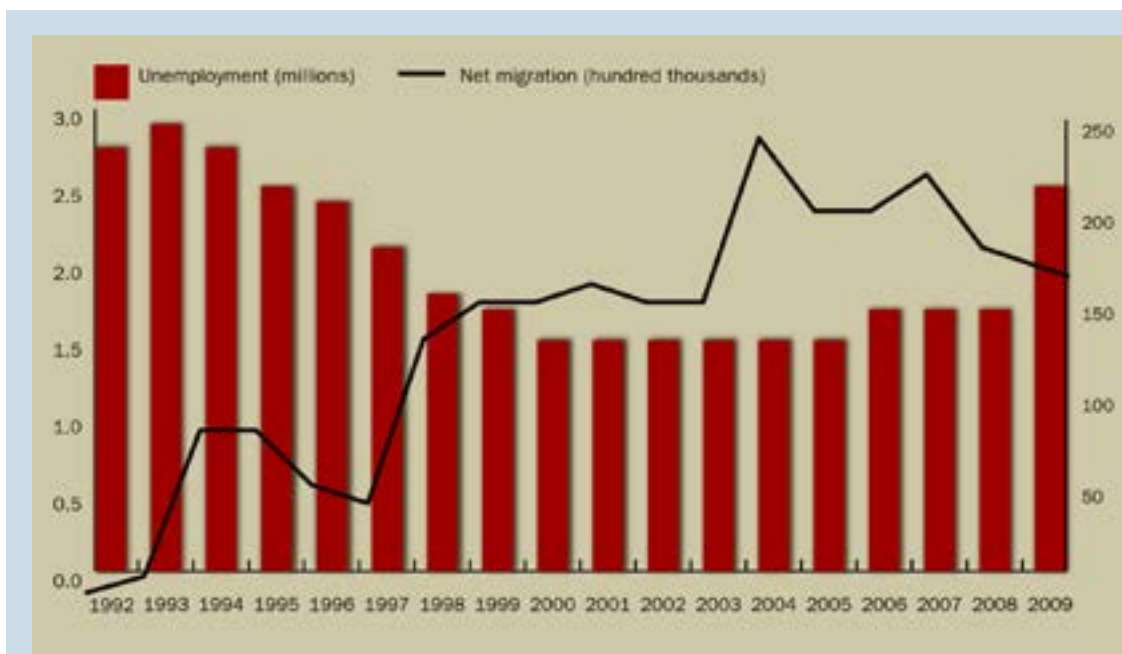
This contrasted with people born in Britain, who received £41.4 billion more than they paid in.

Migrants make an even bigger contribution over a lifecycle.

The 515,000 migrants who came to Britain in 2016 are projected to make a £26.9 billion contribution across their lifetimes.

Meanwhile migrants from outside the EU are expected to contribute £28,000 each across their lifetime.

People should have the right to



FACTORS SUCH as the 2008 economic crash (above) have a much more significant impact on unemployment than migration. And far from lowering wages, migrants have fought battles that have won higher pay, such as cleaners at the London School of Economics (left)

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

live and work where they please, regardless of whether they are seen as "useful" for business.

We should reject any division between "higher-skilled" and "lower-skilled" people.

But unfortunately the Labour Party has accepted these very distinctions.

Shadow home secretary Diane Abbott said immigration policy must "treat people fairly" but that "our immigration policy needs to be based on our economic needs".

Discriminating against one section of workers makes it easier for the Tories and the bosses to attack us all.

And it makes it harder to launch a united fightback.

To read the full MAC report go to bit.ly/MACmigrants

Bosses are the real drain

RIGHT WINGERS, and some union leaders, say that migrants undermine wages.

Yet the MAC report makes clear that "immigration is not a major determinant of the wage growth" of British-born workers.

It found "little evidence" that European migration had any "substantial impact" on wages.

The report said there is "some suggestion" that migration can have a very small negative impact on "lower skilled groups".

This could amount to a "0.8 percent decrease" for some British-born workers.

Yet this is nothing compared to the wage cuts imposed by

the Tories and the bosses.

And it says "these estimates are imprecise and subject to uncertainty".

Right wingers also argue that migrants put pressure on public services.

The MAC report said, "Migrants contribute much more to the health service and social care in financial resources and through work that they consume in services."

There is "no evidence" that migration has hit the quality of healthcare, nor that it has "reduced parental choice in schools".

The real drain on wages and services are the Tories and the bosses.

Most EU migrants 'ineligible'

THE INSTITUTE for Public Policy Research said attacks on "lower-skilled" workers would have a big impact.

It said that 97 percent of EU workers in the hospitality industry, such as hotels and restaurants, would be ineligible to come here under MAC plans.

Some 95 percent of transport and storage workers would be ineligible, as would a quarter of EU finance workers.

Some bosses have spoken out against the MAC report.

They want the ability to exploit migrants for profit when they want, without restriction, and to discard them when it suits.

But migrants' rights shouldn't be based on what's good for the bosses. We need to defend the rights of all migrants.

FIGURE IT OUT

75 percent of current EU migrants would not be allowed in Britain if the MAC's proposals were adopted, says the Institute for Public Policy Research

97 percent of EU hospitality workers would be ineligible

95 percent of those in transport and storage would be ineligible too

Who are the lower-skilled workers?

THE MAC "preferred" definition of higher and lower-skilled workers comes from the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

It's known as the Standard Occupational Classification.

This categorises people's jobs into four broad groups based on the time needed for someone to become fully competent in it.

According to this, "lower" skilled jobs include "caring personal service occupations" and "process, plant and machine operatives" among others.

The MAC said that the ONS definition would categorise 45 percent of jobs as low-skilled in 2013, or 13.4 million jobs.

But just to confuse things, the MAC sometimes uses "other definitions" when they are more suitable.

On other pages...
Anti-racist activists get organised
>>Page 20 and 16



Hundreds of Tanzanians perish in overfilled boat catastrophe

The deaths of 224 people in east Africa were caused by unscrupulous ferry operators and extreme poverty, argues **Charlie Kimber**

A DROWNING tragedy in Tanzania, east Africa, has highlighted the fatal effects of poverty.

Tanzanian authorities said on Sunday that 224 people had died when a ferry capsized in Lake Victoria. The ferry, MV Nyerere, sank on Thursday of last week just a few metres from the dock on Ukerewe, the lake's biggest island.

Local reports indicate the ferry was overloaded with up to 400 people on board, even though the maximum capacity was around 100.

Boat operators cram as many people as possible on board to make money, and people are too poor to choose any other option.

Tanzania, a British colony until 1961, has moved from the "African socialism" of post-independence leader Julius Nyerere to acceptance of all the market dogmas of the world's bankers.

It has implemented the World Bank doctrines of privatisation and charges for key services such as health facilities.

Repayments

The country has high debt repayments to financial institutions and banks which drain money from vital needs. And debt relief is linked to implementing austerity policies.

The local rich are also to blame. Mbaki Farki, a rescue diver in Tanzania, said that the ferry fleet on Lake Victoria lacks adequate safety precautions.

Ferries are supposed to have life jackets, but the fleet has insufficient equipment, Farki said. He added that the vessels' operators also lack

BACK STORY

Tanzania was a British colony until 1961

- It has high debt repayments and debt relief is linked to implementing austerity policies
- Tanzania has implemented privatisation and charges for health services
- Over a quarter of its 55 million population live in acute poverty
- Half the population lives on less than £1.50 a day
- And 20 percent live below the United Nations food poverty line

plans for aiding people with disabilities, among the most vulnerable in such incidents.

John Mnyika, of the main opposition party Chadema, accused the government of dereliction.

"We have often raised concerns about the poor condition of this ferry, but the government turned a deaf ear," he said. "We have repeatedly denounced this negligence."

Accidents are not uncommon on Lake Victoria, which straddles Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya.

In 1996 around 800 people were killed according to Tanzanian government records when the MV Bukoba capsized on Lake Victoria.

In 2011, hundreds of people were confirmed dead when the MV Spice Islander I sank off the coast of the archipelago of Zanzibar.



On other pages...

World powers toy with Syrian lives in shaky ceasefire deal >>> **Page 15**

Threat of famine in Yemen

A HORRIFIC civil war, soaring food prices and attacks on its main port leave Yemen on the cusp of a famine which could inflict a "huge loss of life".

Already two thirds of the population rely on aid.

Fresh warnings about the imminent famine have come from the United Nations humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock.

He says that prices have risen by 30 percent, which means millions are struggling to afford

enough food to live on. Saudi Arabia led the invasion of Yemen in 2015, and its forces are desperate to secure control of key port Hodeidah.

Attacks on Hodeidah were paused in July, but after peace talks collapsed the offensive began again on 7 September.

Yemen is 90 percent dependent on food imports, so damages to ports will have a huge impact on everyone who is unable to escape the besieged country.

A SURVIVOR is pulled from the wreckage

GERMANY

Thousands of Nazis march as racists carry out violent attacks on migrants

THE BATTLE against the far right continued last weekend as anti-racists mobilised in Germany.

Around 800 people joined a demonstration in Oberrad, a district of Frankfurt, against a meeting of the racist Alternative for Germany (AfD).

Entry was blocked and only a few dozen people went in.

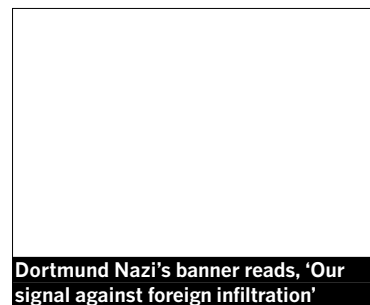
In Chemnitz, the site of recent demonstrations by Nazis and assaults on migrants, the battle is at its sharpest.

Around 2,000 Nazis demonstrated last weekend opposed by around 500 anti-racists. The Nazis called for mobilisations in the city for the next 40 weeks.

On Friday evening last week around 150 Nazis marched in the city of Dortmund. One of their slogans was, "Those who love Germany are antisemitic."

They also chanted, "National Socialism [Nazism] now!"

The police did nothing. The Suddeutsche Zeitung



newspaper last week published a chronology of far right violence in recent weeks. It included:

● 29 August, Wismar—three attackers broke a 20 year old refugee's nose and beat him with an iron chain.

● 29 August Sonderhausen—four men, who are part of the right wing scene according to police, severely injured a 33 year old Eritrean.

● 3 September, Rostock—a man attacked three students from Azerbaijan with a baton at a tram station.

● 14 September, Munich—a man shouted, "I will kill all foreigners!" as he sprayed a Nigerian immigrant with mace in the face.

Such street assaults are the direct result of far right agitation and the racism of the state and the police.

Meanwhile the AfD has moved even further to the right.

The "Patriotic Platform" within the party, set up to drive it in a more racist direction, has disbanded declaring that its work is done.

Die Linke MP Christine Buchholz said on Facebook, "The AfD is a fascist party in the making. Whoever chooses AfD chooses Nazis."

The failures of the main parties have opened the door to the AfD. One poll last week showed them on 18 percent, overtaking the Labour-style social democrats on 17 percent.

There will be a major demonstration against the AfD in Berlin on 13 October.

Why vote Labour?

I WAS born into a working class family in a town in Nottinghamshire.

I am barely old enough to remember a time before Tory austerity. The Labour Party seems uninspired to help the north of England.

My Labour MP is John Mann—principled, well-meaning and a man of the people.

But he seems to be outnumbered by the privately educated champagne socialists and ladder climbers.

I believe that Labour's unsuitability is proven by their current obsession with identity politics.

They do a lot of good work supporting minorities but still don't try to help the working class.

This is despite the fact that many of those discriminated against are working class.

Socio-economic class is, by far, the greatest indicator of how well you will do in the future.

Labour—and sometimes the Tories—promise to reconnect and re-industrialise the north but nothing happens. They simply don't care.

Why don't we demand more from Labour? Why do we keep voting for a party that has been failing us for nearly half of a century?

Ross Phillips
Retford

I won't back the elitist EU

I AM a socialist. I oppose racism, violence and sexism. I was a proud shop steward and branch chair for the TGWA union.

I voted Leave in the European Union (EU) referendum as did over 60 percent of Labour voters—a group of voters the Labour Party would like to be silent.

We're also a group of voters Labour MPs such as Chuka Umunna, Mary Creagh and Yvette Cooper choose to ignore.

These superior elitists think they know better than us and have the audacity to complain that we didn't understand exactly what we were voting on.

I believe the EU can't be reformed. It is broken. Everything good about the EU could be achieved voluntarily.

Robert Algar
Scunthorpe



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Just a thought...

Posturing on People's Vote

I READ your article criticising calls for a People's Vote (Socialist Worker, 19 September). I expected better from you.

Your conclusion seems to be that a socialist Brexit is not achievable without revolution, but that's not going to happen.

So what was the point of your article—posturing?

Alan Wilson
On Facebook

Migrant myths exposed

LAST WEEK'S migration report shows migrants are not pressuring public services, and give more than they take out.

Austerity and tax breaks for the rich reinforce the myth.

Pauline Smith
On Twitter

Wake up to Ukip threat

YOUR REPORT that Ukip leader Gerard Batten supports fascist marches (Socialist Worker, 19 September) is scary.

Those who say Ukip is harmless, open your eyes—this is not OK!

Hannah Biss
On Twitter

Labour needs open selection

ALL LABOUR candidates for MP—including Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell—should be selected by party members each time.

It doesn't matter if they're left or right—this is a democracy.

I speak as a proud Corbyn supporter.

Bob Inapples
On Twitter

A miner fact about coal

THE COAL industry was nationalised in 1948. According to big business, the National Coal Board (NCB) did not produce a single profit between then and the mid 1970s—showing nationalisation doesn't work.

But the NCB did make a substantial profit every year. It all went to the bank accounts to compensate the former mine owners.

David McDonald
East Kilbride

Standing with Palestinians in Manchester and Bristol

SOCIALIST WORKER Student Societies (SWSS) were at freshers fairs at the University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University last week.

People were really interested in what we had to say—especially about Palestine.

Lots saw that we had a Freedom for Palestine poster and wanted to come over and talk to us about it.

I think the interest is definitely to do with the recent furore over attempts to brand support for Palestine in the Labour Party as antisemitic.

The use of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of antisemitism—which says its antisemitic to call Israel a racist state—is meant to silence criticism of Israel.

Some people came to argue with us. One person wanted to argue about Israel. And a few people asked about antisemitism in the Labour Party.

We argued that it's not antisemitic to call Israel a racist state. But we also pointed out that the Conservative Party is friendly with Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orban, who is an open antisemite.

They didn't know about that—it shows how biased the media coverage on Labour has been.

The row over the last few months has made the issue more visible. Most of the people we spoke to supported Palestine.

They wanted to talk to a group that clearly stands with Palestinians. We gave away all of



Showing solidarity with Palestine

PICTURE GUY SMALLMAN

our Freedom for Palestine stickers at University of Manchester.

SWSS was involved in campaigns and protests for Palestine and the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions campaign last year. It's going to be a big part of our activity this year.

Molly Docherty
Manchester

●BRISTOL LAST week saw a very large and vibrant meeting on the issue of "Antisemitism, Corbyn and Justice for Palestine".

Over 160 people crammed into the event. Those in attendance were overwhelmingly members of the Labour Party. They were enraged by the smears against Corbyn and the left.

Speakers at the top and contributions from the floor expressed anger at the way that people on the left of the party had betrayed the Palestinian cause.

There were contributions from union members that also

highlighted the way their leaderships had put pressure on Corbyn without any mandate to do so. In effect union leaders Len McCluskey, Dave Prentis and Tim Roache had undermined Corbyn and strengthened the right.

There was debate over how much to contest the details of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition. Some said we shouldn't get bogged down in detail and just raise solidarity for Palestine.

Others argued that the definition was a key argument and to not take this on would allow those backing Israel against the Palestinians a major victory.

I think this is important as building movements without fighting for politics weakens the whole left.

Overall it was a meeting that gave the left confidence to carry on the fight.

Huw Williams
Bristol

A Labour conference fringe event organised by Momentum attracted hundreds of activists who debated how to better organise society and get Jeremy Corbyn elected as prime minister. **Sadie Robinson** and **Charlie Kimber** argue that The World Transformed festival showed a thirst for change but also the problems of building a movement based on electoral politics

HOW CAN LABOUR WIN AND CAN IT CHANGE SOCIETY?

HUNDREDS OF Jeremy Corbyn supporters flocked to The World Transformed event in Liverpool during Labour Party conference. The size of the event, organised by the Momentum group, showed the interest in left wing ideas and in fighting for a better world.

Much of it sounded very radical. At a session on “Power for the many—a radical agenda for democracy” MP Jon Trickett called for a “wholesale transformation” of how society is run. “There needs to be a remaking of the British state,” he said. “That is what the Labour Party is committed to.”

There were repeated references to the “socialist government” that would be in office in the event of a Corbyn victory.

A session on the welfare state saw speakers call for a major redistribution of wealth to guarantee everyone a basic minimum income. And a meeting on democratising the media saw speakers look for “bottom up” ways of challenging media owners.

Many speakers on the top tables delivered fiery speeches. But there was also some vagueness and signs that Labour in government would limit its radicalism.

So shadow chancellor John McDonnell told a rally last Saturday evening that Labour would reverse “most” of the tax cuts to corporations.

When asked how Labour would increase democracy in the party, Trickett said the party would “continue discussing” this. “The leadership has to learn from members and the general public,” he added.

“It’s up to you to guide us in the direction you want to take.”

In several sessions, people in the audience called for Labour to go further or challenged speakers.

In the welfare session, economist Stewart Lansley mapped out a time-scale for bringing in a basic income and redistributing wealth.

One man asked whether Labour could “accelerate these changes given the levels of social inequality”. “People can’t wait,” he said. “There’s a more immediate need.”

Lansley said that changes would take time because of a need to win an argument with ordinary people about the need for a basic income.

There was a sense from at least some of the audience that ordinary

Corbyn joins Liverpool fans at their match against Southampton last week

Jon Trickett—“Wholesale transformation”

Diane Abbott—“Prioritise skilled workers”

people have to take things into their own hands, not just get Corbyn elected.

In a session on “Beating the Bosses” Seth Wheeler, editor of socialist journal Notes from Below, told the audience, “It’s up to us to dictate our future, it’s not up to Jeremy Corbyn.”

Seth argued workers should “keep one foot in and one foot out” of Labour.

Along with other speakers, he acknowledged that a Labour government isn’t guaranteed to act in workers’ interests.

There was also a sense from the floor of the need to hold Labour politicians to account. So Paddy, a teacher from Islington, noted McDonnell’s pledge to abolish anti-union laws but said, “Let’s make sure he fucking does it.”

FACING THE BOSSES’ RESISTANCE

THERE WERE lots of great ideas for how society can be better run in the interests of the majority. And there was some understanding of how big a task it will be to win real change.

But there was little debate on how to actually implement radical ideas in the face of resistance from the ruling class and the state.

It was as if there was a blind spot for much of the event about the need to organise to challenge the rich and the states that back them.

Chairs in some sessions specifically called on people to limit themselves to asking questions of the panel—resulting in more speeches from the top table. In others, such as a session on Brexit, top table speakers talked for so long that there was little time for the audience to say what they thought.

The event showed that radical and socialist ideas can get a hearing and that people want society to be run differently.

But there was also a sense in many of the meetings that electing Corbyn is the end goal that will herald a big shift in society.

In reality it would be the start of a much bigger battle. Corbyn has already made concessions to the right under pressure—such as retreating on scrapping Trident missiles.

And Labour has accepted some divisive rhetoric on immigration, with shadow home secretary Diane Abbott calling for prioritising “skilled” migration.

This partly reflects the fact that, despite having a left leader, Labour includes many right

wingers who want to placate the bosses. It also reflects the fact that ultimately Labour wants to manage the system and so accepts its dominant ideas.

Unite union member Aiden told Socialist Worker, “Labour’s policies haven’t been strong enough on anti-racism.

“Diane Abbott came out with policies that were a bit half-arsed last week. Talking about skilled migrants buys into the idea of good and bad migrants.

“Personally I’m uncomfortable with that rhetoric. As individuals I trust people like Diane Abbott and Corbyn. But the party could be better.”

In government the pressure will be much stronger.

But unfortunately making the main goal electing Corbyn, rather than waging struggles now, can undermine building this movement.



THE WORLD Transformed fringe conference was attended by hundreds of Labour left supporters (left). Protesting in support of the Palestinians and in defence of Jeremy Corbyn earlier this year (below, right)



A huge crowd gathered to hear leading Labour figures at a rally at Liverpool’s Pier Head before the conference started (right). Sonya Robotham (below) and Jack Johnson (below Sonya) are determined to defend Corbyn from antisemitism smears

DEFENDING CORBYN AGAINST THE CHARGE OF ANTISEMITISM

THE TORIES, the tabloids and right wing Labour MPs are waging war on Corbyn. The latest attack labels him antisemitic because of his backing for the Palestinians.

People at The World Transformed were mixed on how the left should respond. Some even saw the attacks as positive.

One new member of the party told Socialist Worker, “It’s good that this has happened because it’s exposing arguments. When they criticise him, it gives him a chance to crystallise his position.”

Others said the attacks from the right were damaging, but remained optimistic. Liverpool Labour member Tom Logan told Socialist Worker, “It’s definitely making it harder for Corbyn to get elected.

“But Corbyn has a back catalogue of being on the right side of history. It’s why we all rallied behind him in the first place.”

Derby Labour member Sonya Robotham said the antisemitism slurs had “damaged and confused” the party. But she added, “You can convince people if you tell the truth.”

Some activists were determined that Labour members should continue to support Palestine.

Jack Johnson told Socialist Worker that Labour members should “get involved with local Palestine Solidarity groups”.

He was disappointed that Labour recently said that it’s antisemitic to call Israel racist. “We should turn our fire on the Tories. Labour should be holding them to account over their failures on antisemitism.”

A Unite member pledged to keep criticising the Israeli state. “I call the Israeli administration a murderous, toxic apartheid system,” she said.

“Their intention is to wipe out every Palestinian.”

NO TO RACISM AND FASCISM

A SESSION on “Britain’s new far right” drew hundreds. Leeds MP and shadow justice secretary Richard Burgon stressed the need not to compromise with racist ideas. He referred to recent attacks on Muslim women who wear the burqa.

“There is pressure to cede on this, to say these views are legitimate,” he said. “This is a big mistake. It’s vital that racist myths are challenged.”

He said the key to beating back fascism is “unity” and “building alliances” against racism.

“We need solidarity with those at the sharp end of bigotry and hatred,” he added.

Author and Labour activist Alan Gibbons described how ordinary people had united to oppose fascist protests in Liverpool. “Don’t be reactive, be proactive,” he urged, describing how anti-fascists had leafleted local football grounds.

Gibbons argued that it’s important to confront the fascists, even if it isn’t always possible to stop them marching.

And Burgon stressed the Stand Up To Racism conference on 20 October and the national anti-racist and anti-fascist protest in London on 17 November.

LESSONS FROM THE EUROPEAN LEFT

A FORUM on the European left underlined the positives and weaknesses of the radical parties represented.

Members of organisations and movements from Italy, Denmark, Germany, France and the Spanish state all spoke well on the failings of capitalism and the collapse of social democracy.

Fabio De Masi, an MP for the German Die Linke party said, “Ten years since the collapse of Lehman Brothers and the start of the financial crisis we have to recognise social democratic parties were hijacked by neoliberalism.”

Probably to the surprise of many in the 200-strong audience, the speakers were nearly unanimous in savaging the European Union as a bosses’ club that lacked any truly democratic elements.

A few years ago such a meeting would have centred on the example of Syriza in Greece, sweeping to office on the back of mass resistance to austerity and the collapse of the traditional Labour-type party.

But Syriza wasn’t on the platform and its record of imposing cuts and privatisation was wholly passed over.

Such silence avoids the tough questions about what happens to the radical left in office.

All the speakers pointed to the growth of the far right. But debate from the floor revealed that some forces are prepared to concede to elements of the racists’ myths rather than challenge them.

De Masi is a supporter of Aufstehen, the movement that combines Corbyn-like economic policy and anti-migrant scapegoating. Aufstehen’s stand has been welcomed by the far right AfD party.

Reeling from the experience of Syriza, sections of the European left are turning their fire on the EU. But they are coupling it with a more pronounced nationalism and conceding to racist arguments.

A speaker from the floor pointed out that we had seen that this encouraged the right, as with Gordon Brown’s “British jobs for British workers” rhetoric and the notorious Labour “Controls on immigration” mug for the 2015 general election.

We need stronger workers’ organisations, not stronger anti-migrant measures.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } PUBLIC MEETINGS

BARNSELY

Politics of the Mind—Marxism and Mental Distress

Thu 4 Oct, 7pm,
YMCA,
Blucher St,
S70 1AP.

With author Iain Ferguson

LONDON: SOUTH

Angela Davis—women, race and class

Wed 3 Oct, 7pm,
Karibu Centre,
7 Gresham Rd,
SW9 7PH

MANCHESTER

Should socialists defend free speech?

Wed 3 Oct, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
6 Mount St, M2 5NS

YORK

#MeToo—sexism and the system

Wed 3 Oct, 7.30pm,
Sea Horse Hotel,
4 Fawcett St, YO10 4AH

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

ABERDEEN

The global crisis—ten years on

Wed 3 Oct, 6pm,
Belmont Cinema Cafe,
49 Belmont St, AB10 1JS

BIRMINGHAM

Angela Davis—women, race and class

Wed 10 Oct, 7pm,
Birmingham LGBT Centre,
38/40 Holloway Circus,
B1 1EQ

BOLTON

1968 the fire last time—when workers and students fought back

Wed 3 Oct, 7pm,
Bolton Socialist Club,
16 Wood St (off Bradshawgate), BL1 1DY

BRISTOL

Erdogan, Turkey and the Kurds

Wed 3 Oct, 7.30pm,
YHA, 14 Narrow Quay,
BS1 4QA

BURNLEY AND PENDLE

Political correctness—friend or foe?

Wed 3 Oct, 7.30pm,
Red Triangle Cafe,
160 St James's St,
BB11 1NR

CHESTERFIELD

Politics of the Mind—Marxism and Mental Distress

Wed 3 Oct, 7.30pm,
Assembly Rooms,
Chesterfield Market Hall,
Market Place, S40 1AR

SOCIALIST WORKER PUBLIC MEETINGS



In the era of Trump, racism and the far right Is socialism possible?

BIRMINGHAM

Wed 3 Oct, 7pm,
The Priory Rooms,
Quaker Meeting House,
40 Bull St, B4 6AF

CARDIFF

Wed 3 Oct, 7.30pm,
Cathays Community Centre,
Cathays Terrace,
CF24 4HX

LONDON: CENTRAL

Wed 3 Oct, 6.15pm,
Room 235 UCL Foster
Court Building,
Malet Place,
WC1E 6B

NEWCASTLE

Thu 4 Oct, 7pm,
Commercial Union House,
39 Pilgrim St,
NE1 6QE

NOTTINGHAM

Wed 3 Oct, 7.30pm,
International
Community Centre,
61b Mansfield Rd,
NG1 3FN

SWANSEA

Thu 4 Oct, 7.30pm,
Brynmill Community Centre,
St Albans Rd,
SA2 0BP

DONCASTER

Britain's housing crisis—where will we live?

Tue 2 Oct, 7.30pm,
Railway Hotel,
West St,
DN1 3AA

DUNDEE

The Brexit crisis—how do we get rid of the Tories?

Wed 3 Oct, 7.30pm,
Dundee Voluntary Action,
10 Constitution Rd,
DD1 1LL

EDINBURGH

Floods, fires and heatwaves—is it too late to stop climate change?

Wed 3 Oct, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
7 Victoria St, EH1 2JL

GLASGOW

Angela Davis—women, race and class

Thu 4 Oct, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
7 Victoria St,
EH1 2JL

HUDDERSFIELD

The Brexit crisis—how do we get rid of the Tories?

Wed 3 Oct, 6.30pm,
Brian Jackson House,
2 New North Parade,
HD1 5JP

HULL

Prevent—why we should dissent

Thu 18 Oct, 7pm,
Cafe licious,
104 Cottingham Rd, HU6 7RZ

LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE

The myths of overpopulation

Thu 4 Oct, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Meeting House Lane, LA1 1TX

LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

The battle of Cable Street and the fight against fascism

Thu 4 Oct, 7pm,
The Swarthmore
Education Centre,
2-7 Woodhouse Square,
LS3 1AD

LIVERPOOL

Capitalism vs the climate

Wed 10 Oct, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
22 School Lane, L1 3BT

LONDON: HACKNEY

The Brexit crisis—how do we get rid of the Tories?

Thu 4 Oct, 7.30pm,
The Round Chapel,
2 Powerscroft Rd,
E5 0PU

LONDON: ISLINGTON

Crisis in Venezuela—can socialism work?

Wed 3 Oct, 7pm,
Italian Trade Union Centre,
124 Canonbury Rd, N1 2UT

LONDON: LEWISHAM

Marx@200—the revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx

Wed 17 Oct, 7.30pm,
Deptford Lounge,
9 Giffin St,
SE8 4RH

LONDON: NEWHAM

Harriet Tubman and the fight against slavery

Wed 3 Oct, 7pm,
Stratford Advice Arcade,
107-109 The Grove (next to Morrisons car park),
E15 1HP

LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

Fascism and the rise of the far right—how do we fight it?

Wed 3 Oct, 7pm,
Oxford House,
Derbyshire St (opposite Bethnal Green Rd Tesco),
E2 6HG

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

Corbyn, Labour and the fight for socialism

Wed 3 Oct, 7.30pm,
Quaker Meeting House,
1a Jewel Rd (off Hoe St),
E17 4QU

MEDWAY

The global crisis—ten years on

Thu 4 Oct, 7.30pm,
Riverside Creative Hub,
Conference room,
13 Military Rd,
ME4 4JG

NORWICH

Aretha Franklin and the Civil Rights Movement

Thu 4 Oct, 7.30pm,
Vauxhall Centre,
Johnson Place,
NR2 2SA

NOTTINGHAM

From Deliveroo to McStrike—how has the working class changed?

Wed 10 Oct, 7.30pm,
International
Community Centre,
61b Mansfield Rd,
NG1 3FN

OXFORD

Echoes of the 1930s—fighting fascism today

Wed 3 Oct, 7.30pm,
Michael Young Building,
Manzil Way,
Cowley Rd,
OX4 1YH

PLYMOUTH

The global crisis—ten years on

Thu 18 Oct, 7.30pm,
Quaker House,
74 Mutley Plain,
PL4 6LF

PORTSMOUTH

Socialism, anti-racism and resistance today

Wed 3 Oct, 7.30pm,
Somerstown
Community Centre,
River's St,
PO5 4EZ

TELFORD

Palestine, antisemitism and defending Corbyn

Thu 18 Oct, 7.30pm,
Carriages,
The Parade,
Wellington,
TF1 1PY

WOLVERHAMPTON AND WALSALL

Trotsky and the Russian Revolution

Wed 3 Oct, 7.30pm,
Wild Bytes Cafe,
Darlington St,
WV1 4HW

{ MOVEMENT EVENTS }

NATIONAL

Confronting racism and fascism—international conference

Sat 20 Oct,
10am-5.30pm,
Friends House,
Euston Road, NW1 2BJ.
Speakers include Labour's John McDonnell and Diane Abbott.

Go to bit.ly/RacismConference

National demonstration

against fascism and racism
Sat 17 Nov, assemble 12 noon,
Central London.

Initiated by Stand Up To Racism and supported by the TUC.

Go to bit.ly/17NovDemo

BOOKMARKS the socialist bookshop



A Rebel's Guide To Martin Luther King
by Yuri Prasad

On the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr approaches, politicians queued to pay their respects. They smother his memory with praise but none will acknowledge the truth—that King was a radical who wanted a complete transformation of society.



“Kill All the Gentlemen” Class Struggle and Change in the English Countryside
by Martin Empson

The modern countryside is the result of centuries of environmental change, but also brutal class struggle. From 1381 to the Pilgrimage of Grace that challenged Henry VIII's power, from food riots to Captain Swing, here is the story of how rural labourers resisted the development of capitalism.

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Shakespearean roles turned on head in Queen Margaret

Gender roles and how they shape society are explored in an innovative new play set in the world of William Shakespeare’s plays, says **Pat Clinton**

QUEEN MARGARET is based on a new script combining the characters from several of William Shakespeare’s historical plays.

It focuses on the important but overlooked female characters.

The central character, Queen Margaret, has the most lines of any female Shakespearian character, appearing in three plays. But she is rarely who comes to mind if anyone is asked to name a woman in Shakespeare.

We still live in a time where gender plays a huge role in our cultural landscape.

Queen Margaret goes further than most modern reinterpretations. Not only does it focus on women, it also gender swaps some of the original male roles, while losing none of the drama.

Audiences are no longer content with seeing any actor play any role—there are calls for more care and attention to be paid to casting. In this production I was pleased to see Henry VI—who had severe health problems—played by a visibly disabled actor.

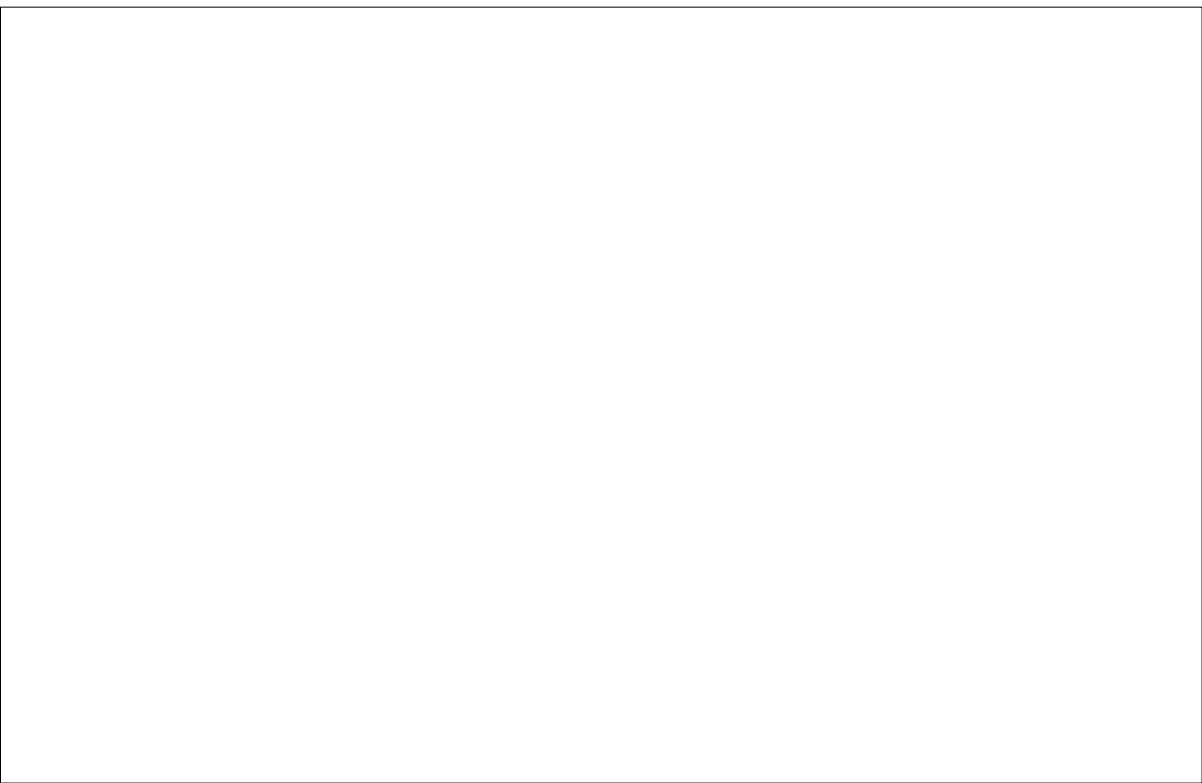
The play affirms why historical art still has a place in modern culture.

Our education system is built more around complex memory tests than comprehension. And even though all art is subjective and from the specific creator’s perspective, it can prompt discussion and thought.

Difficult

The man sat next to me was taking notes throughout the play.

During the interval I spoke to him and he said, “I always found history difficult to fully adsorb in school, so



QUEEN MARGARET (Jade Anouka) squares up to Henry VI, played by Max Runham

PICTURE: JOHAN PERSSON

it’s useful to see it in a play instead”. The writer, Jeanie O’Hare, talks in the programme about their motivations being based on gender.

However, it can be no mistake that the wider political themes in the play reflect ones we see today. You could sense the audience was quick to draw contemporary parallels.

There was a lot of almost overt comparisons. These range from “rebels” holding a looted TV, to

Margaret feeling torn between her duties to England as queen and France as her country of birth.

There is much to enjoy in Queen Margaret, both for fans of Shakespeare and those not yet won over.

Queen Margaret
Directed by Elizabeth Freestone.
At the Royal Exchange, Manchester,
until 6 October
Go to bit.ly/QMargaret

The Captain points a finger at trappings of authority

FILM

THE CAPTAIN

Directed by Robert Schwentke
On limited release

IT’S TWO weeks before the end of the Second World War and the German army is disintegrating.

As Allied troops pour into Germany, a Wehrmacht private deserts.

But he finds himself hunted by a vicious gang of military police who blame the moral failings of the lower orders for the disastrous course of the war. When he discovers

the abandoned uniform of a German air force captain, the soldier grabs his opportunity to escape the front for good.

But instead, his attempts to hide his true identity lead him to join the very military police who pursue him.

Assuming the persona of a Nazi official means becoming implicated in some of the sickening final war crimes of the dying Third Reich.

This is the true story of Willi Herold, the “Butcher of Emsland”.

True to this epithet,



The Captain is a brutal watch

The Captain is made up of utterly gruelling scenes of brutal violence. They drive home the vicious irrationality of the Nazi regime as it drew its last breaths, in a similar way to 2004’s Downfall.

Downfall focused on the top of the Nazi Party and its blind loyalty to a Hitler increasingly detached from the reality of impending defeat. The Captain is more interested in how people use the authority of others to displace responsibility for their own actions.

Claiming to have been

sent on the authority the Fuhrer himself, Herold becomes a lightning rod for the sickest elements in the decaying Nazi army.

The Captain is a punishing watch. But it is also a film that laughs at the absurdity of authority, mixing pitiless violence with elements of a mistaken identity farce.

It’s with this black humour that The Captain throws the accusation of “imposter” at everyone who claims the right to make others suffer on the basis of a uniform, rank or status.
Richard Donnelly

FILM

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ANDRÉ

Directed by Kate Novack
Out from 28 September

THIS FILM explores the life and career of fashion journalist André Leon Talley. He grew up in the US segregated South and went on to work at Women’s Wear Daily, W and American Vogue. It blends archival footage with Talley’s own reflections.

EXHIBITION

BRUSHES WITH WAR—ART FROM THE FRONT LINE 14-18

Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow
Until Sunday 6 January 2019

A NEW exhibition gathers together 219 original paintings and drawings by soldiers who served in the First World War.

Following a chronological narrative, Brushes with War portrays most major battles and all aspects of the First World War. It features artwork created by soldiers from a number of countries.

THEATRE

THE BURNING TOWER

By Helena Thompson
Until 13 October
Kensal House Community Rooms, Kensal House Estate, Ladbroke Grove, W10

BURNING TOWER makes a case for investment in social housing.

This site-specific play is performed in Kensal House, one of many progressive modernist housing schemes built in Britain in the 1930s. It takes its name from a tarot card, an obvious reference to Grenfell Tower.

The play centres around the relationship between two friends, Sarah (Bianca Stephens) and Em (Alice Franziska) who have grown up on local estates close to Grenfell.

It wants to deliver a living history of the benefits of council housing. It has trouble living up to its ambitions, at times it’s difficult to keep up with the historical information about social housing. Despite this there is a strong sense that council housing is worth fighting for.

Moyra Samuels

Alice Franziska plays Em

THIRTY years ago this week publishers released a new novel by one of the most talented contemporary fiction writers to come out of the English-speaking world.

Salman Rushdie's eagerly anticipated book *The Satanic Verses* hit the bookshops on 26 September 1988. It was widely praised by critics and immediately nominated for the prestigious Booker Prize.

Rushdie, who had grown up in India and then moved to Britain, was well known for his criticism of colonialism, Western imperialism and for siding with black and Asian people who faced racism in this country.

Yet within weeks he found himself at the centre of a storm of outrage from Muslims in Britain and internationally, with demonstrations on the streets, calls for *The Satanic Verses* to be banned and for the author to be punished for blasphemy.

Then in February 1989 Rushdie was forced into hiding after a call by the Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini for Rushdie and all those associated with the book to be put to death for blaspheming the Prophet Muhammad. For the next decade Rushdie lived in fear, while what became known as the “Rushdie affair” continued to play out nationally and internationally.

Rushdie was known for his “magical realist” style of writing fiction, which mixed events and characters that we recognise as being “real” with “extraordinary” flights of fantasy and magical happenings.

The Satanic Verses contains a dream sequence that involves a Prophet Muhammad-like figure (named Mahound) and the early history of Islam.

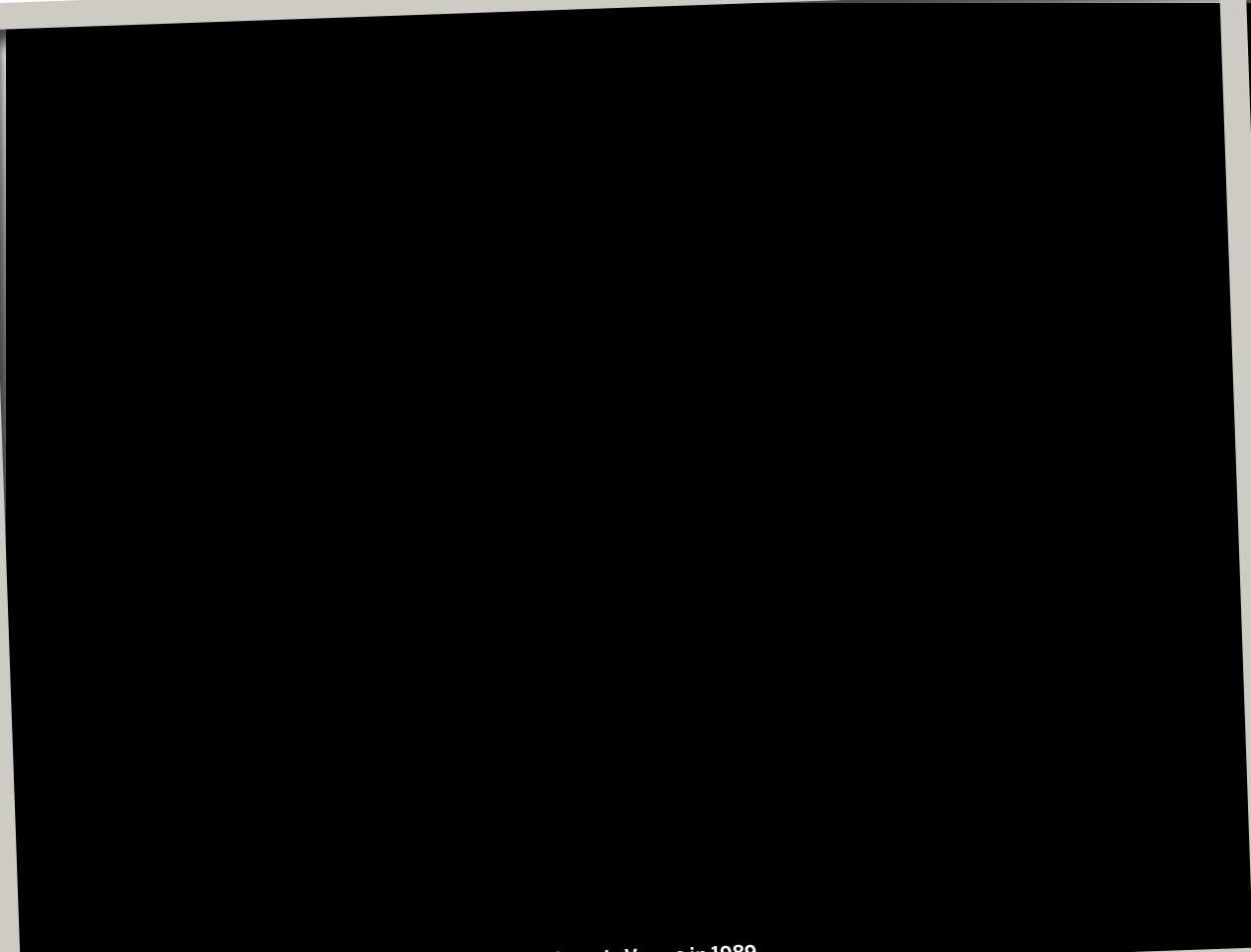
It is the portrayal of the Muhammad/Mahound character, who was depicted as lecherous, unscrupulous and a false prophet, which was seen by those who called for the book to be banned as a deliberate trashing of Islam.

Rushdie and his supporters argued this was not his intention, and in any case was a work of fiction. Unfortunately, this was not accepted by growing numbers of Muslims.

There was the immediate anger against Rushdie and *The Satanic Verses*—and what they saw as the British establishment’s dismissal of calls for the book to be withdrawn or banned. This in turn fed a racist backlash against Muslims.

There was also an international context. Episodes such as the oil embargo by the Gulf states in retaliation for Western governments’ support for Israel during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War rattled Western powers.

Their worries grew after the overthrowing in 1979 of the Western-backed Shah of Iran and the rise of the



PROTESTING IN London against Salman Rushdie and *The Satanic Verses* in 1989

ISLAMOPHOBIA, FREE SPEECH AND RUSHDIE

Salman Rushdie’s book *The Satanic Verses* was published thirty years ago and met by a storm of protests from Muslims. Hassan Mahamdallie looks at what was behind the anger and how a new form of racism flourished in its wake



Ayatollah Khomeini

Ayatollah Khomeini, Western commentators began to stoke old anti-Muslim prejudices.

These factors combined to lead to the growth of what we now call Islamophobia—constant scaremongering and racist justifications for Western military interventions abroad, coupled with hostile attitudes, policies and laws targeting Muslim minorities at home.

As the anti-racist thinker Ambalvananer Sivanandan described, the result was that



British Muslims believed that the powerful didn’t care about them

“all the bits and pieces of racist belief have become telescoped into each other, and every stereotype reinforces another.

“The Arab gets telescoped into the Muslim, Iranians become Arabs, Khomeini and Islamic fundamentalism gets mixed up with oil sheikhs holding the West to ransom, the Turks who clean the streets of Western Europe and provide domestic help to its middle classes are suddenly become part of an invading army.

“All Asians are ‘Pakis’, and ‘Paki’ passes as a synonym for mad Muslim.”

The Rushdie affair made this growing strand of racism suddenly overt.

Muslim resentments were also fuelled by anger and despair among South Asian working-class people that they had been abandoned by those in power—pushed to the bottom of British society by decades of blatant racism.

Low paid manual industries that Muslim communities were almost wholly dependent on, such as textiles, had been in long term decline.

The Thatcher Tory government’s offensive against the strongest sections of the working class, culminating in the defeat of the Miners’ Strike in 1985, had a crushing effect.

For example, by 1988 what remained of the Lancashire and Yorkshire mills were completely wiped out by a wave of closures that demoralised trade unions didn’t fight. Male unemployment levels among Asians hit 50 percent levels in some northern towns.

BY THE time the Rushdie affair erupted, a new generation of British-born Muslims was already drawing the conclusion that Muslims were isolated, and those in power cared very little for them, their concerns or beliefs.

As the opposing sides became more entrenched, other elements of the book, for example its damning portrayal of British racism and society, were completely forgotten.

Although the Tory government had defended Rushdie’s right to freedom of expression, ministers and MPs did not hide their distaste for someone they clearly regarded as a brown-skinned nuisance.

The foreign secretary Geoffrey Howe told the BBC that the book was not only offensive to Muslims. “The British government, the British people have no affection for the book,” he said.

It was, Howe went onto complain, “extremely critical, rude about us. It compares Britain with Hitler’s Germany. We do not like that.”

In what has now become a familiar scenario in our post 9/11 world, British Muslims were then baited by powerful figures, who believed the Rushdie affair gave them free rein to brand Islam’s followers as backward, irrational, and dangerous.

Far right forces then rushed in to capitalise on the space opened up for them.

In December 1988 Muslims in Bolton, Lancashire, organised a demonstration during which a copy of *The Satanic Verses* was burnt. This received little media coverage. And then in January 1989 another copy of the book was burnt during

a demonstration in Bradford. This time the national media were on hand to record it.

What followed was a torrent of condemnation. Muslims were “barbarians”, “fanatics” and directly compared to Nazi book-burners.

In the aftermath, the Daily Mail raged “Who asked Muslims to run our lives?” It went on to claim that “Muslims are taking Bradford back to the Middle Ages. They think they have the right to turn the place into Tehran, Iran. It’s intolerable for them to set up separate foreign countries here.”

But it was the turning against Muslims by large sections of the liberal intelligentsia that proved most shocking.

Public figures who Muslims might have thought would have at least acknowledged their grievances instead lined up to abuse them. For example, the feminist author Fay Weldon wrote a pamphlet called *Sacred Cows* which heaped insult upon insult on Muslims and Islam.

Any middle ground for those who wanted to support Rushdie’s right to freedom of expression, but who also refused to line up with the growing racist onslaught against Muslims, faced an uphill struggle.

There were some principled attempts, however, and Socialist Worker’s coverage was among them. But any hope of dialogue evaporated in February 1989 as Iran’s Ayatollah Khomeini called for the death of Rushdie “along with all editors and publishers aware of the book’s contents”.

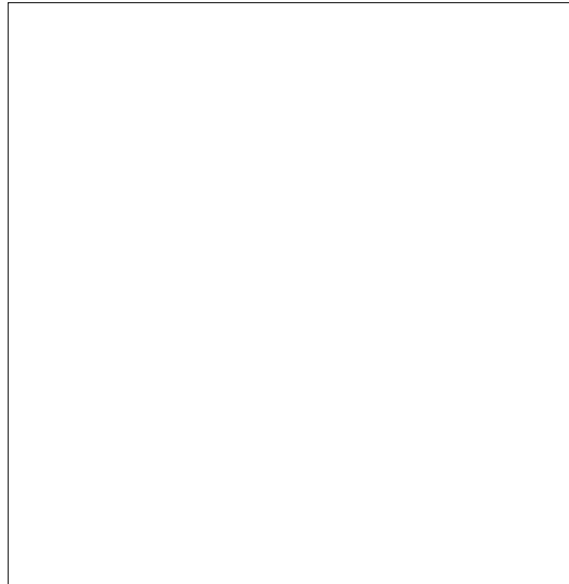
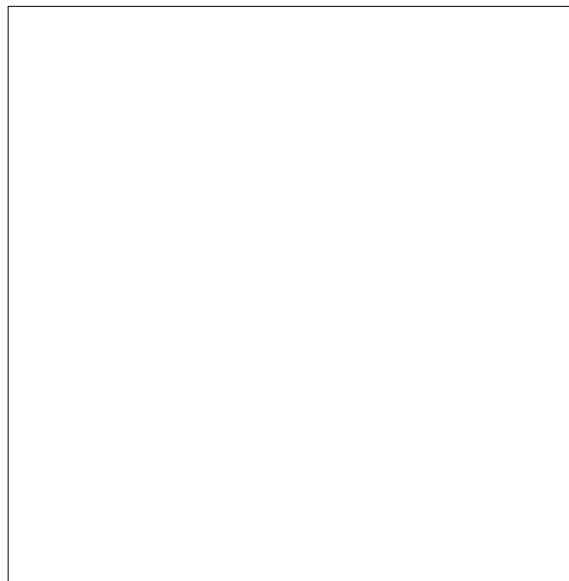
This poured petrol on the fire, feeding already alarming levels of Islamophobic hostility and increasing the danger to Rushdie.

Before he was forced into hiding Socialist Worker had carried the headline, “No to censorship. No to racism” and later ran what was to be one of Rushdie’s last public interviews for many years.

He told the paper that he had not expected the book to cause such controversy and was clearly uncomfortable with some of those who had come to his defence.

“It’s no pleasure to me to be supported by the Sun when it’s referring to Asians as rats”, he said. “I’m not on the Sun’s side in that. I’d sooner be with the rats”.

The immediate effect of the Rushdie affair was a revival in the authority of conservative Muslim religious leaders. But the



Northern mill towns were decimated by closures in the 1980s (top) The 1979 Iranian Revolution posed a threat to the West (above) Salman Rushdie with The Satanic Verses (below)

rapidly forming “British Muslim” identity proved to be more than just a return to the past or an exercise in curbing freedoms.

Among younger people this new way of describing themselves would prove to be a source of self-confidence, and to open up the possibilities of Muslims joining with others to oppose not only Islamophobia, but also war and wider injustices.



World powers toy with Syrian lives in shaky ceasefire deal

A pact between Russia and Turkey is more about global power politics than stopping a massacre, says **Charlie Kimber**



TURKISH SOLDIERS near the border with Idlib in Syria

BACK STORY

Bashar al-Assad’s regime has waged civil war on ordinary Syrian people

● A popular revolution that began in 2011 has been largely crushed

● The regime destroyed the towns, villages and cities at the centre of the uprising

● Rival global powers fought for influence over opposing sides in the civil war

● Now it may be coming to an end—and those powers are competing for the spoils

deal also shows the West that Turkey has alternative partners if it wants, and distracts attention from its economic crisis.

The move also embeds Turkey’s forces closer to the northern Syria regions where Kurdish forces are trying to regroup.

The Syrian government of president Bashar al-Assad was pushed to the side during the Idlib deal, with Russia speaking for it. But last week Syria emphasised

its determination to “liberate every last inch” of the country.

This is just one reason why the deal may soon fall part.

The US doesn’t want Russia working with Turkey, and it doesn’t want Russia to be seen as building peace.

The Israeli government also fears that Iran, an ally of Russia and Syria, will cement its place in Syria.

Attacks

Hours after the Idlib deal was announced a Russian military aircraft was downed, killing 15 people. It was hit by “friendly” Syrian anti-aircraft fire during Israeli attacks inside Syria.

And it’s not clear that Turkey can keep its side of the bargain. Idlib is controlled mostly by the Hayat Tahrir Sham (HTS) coalition.

Turkey called it a terrorist group a month ago. Yet now Turkey will have to cooperate with HTS, or at least hold it back from attacks on the Russian and Syrian forces.

Idlib was already supposed to be a “de-escalation” zone under an agreement secured between Russia, Iran and Turkey a year ago.

That agreement collapsed and so might this one.

None of the manoeuvres start from the interests of the Syrian people. The popular revolution against Assad in 2011 has been largely crushed. Outside imperial powers—in particular the US and Russia—have bombed and blasted the population.

A further Syrian tragedy may only have been postponed.



The US and Russia have bombed and blasted the population

READ MORE

● **Socialist Worker’s 1989 interview with Salman Rushdie**

by Gareth Jenkins and Rahul Patel
bit.ly/SWRushdie

● **The Satanic Verses**
by Salman Rushdie
£8.99

● **Freedom to spread hate?**
by Alex Callinicos
bit.ly/freedom-hate

● **Islamophobia—how the new racism is fuelled by old prejudices**

Socialist Worker article by Yuri Prasad
bit.ly/Islam-racism

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Anti-racist action to take on the right

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

SUPPORTERS OF Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) have been organising against racism and the threat of the far right across Britain.

The SUTR group in west London was part of a hundreds-strong solidarity vigil outside Al-majlis Al Hussaini Islamic centre last Wednesday. A driver had tried to mow down worshippers leaving a religious festival at the mosque the previous night.

Dr Ali Abd, who attended the solidarity vigil, told Socialist Worker, "The response has been fantastic. 'We're not going to feel intimidated by this attack.'"

The attack comes as the far right are gaining confidence.

Fuelled

Racism pushed by the Tories and the press against Muslims, migrants and refugees has fuelled a resurgent street movement around Nazi Tommy Robinson.

The Democratic Football Lads Alliance has called a march in London on 13 October. Alongside street

BACK STORY

Stand Up To Racism groups are organising activity across Britain

● They are fighting to push back Tory racism and take on the resurgent far right

● The west London group supported a vigil outside an Islamic centre last week

● Worshippers there had been subject to an attack

● Groups in Manchester and Leeds leafleted at football grounds

● Groups are publicising a conference on 20 October, and protests on 13 October and 17 November

● See standuptoracism.org for more information

mobilisations, they are trying to build support among football fans.

That's why SUTR groups in Manchester and Leeds took the anti-racist message to football grounds last week.

Campaigners leafleted the Manchester United vs Wolves match at Old Trafford last Saturday.

One SUTR activist said,



LEAFLETTING AT Old Trafford football ground last week

PICTURE: MANCHESTER STAND UP TO RACISM

"Some supporters took a leaflet, read it and joined in."

"Many others took the leaflet out of their pocket once seated inside and sat reading it before the match started."

And in Leeds around 14 SUTR supporters leafleted Elland Road football ground on Tuesday of last week.

The local group reported "overwhelmingly a very posi-

tive reaction" from the fans. "Hundreds of Stand Up To Racism stickers and nearly 1,000 leaflets were given out," it said.

The leafleting was supported by the Unite union.

Meanwhile, a SUTR group in Birmingham organised a 100-strong protest outside Ukip's national conference last Saturday (see page 20).

And Peterborough SUTR has called a protest against Ukip leader Gerard Batten for 29 October.

SUTR groups are building for a major international conference on 20 October and an anti-racist, anti-fascist demonstration on 17 October.

At an 80-strong meeting in Sheffield last Wednesday, senior assistant

general secretary of the RMT union Steve Hedley warned against making concessions to far right arguments.

"We can't win over working class people by taking on the clothes of the far right," he said.

Leaflet

Around 40 people came to an SUTR meeting in Lowestoft, Suffolk, last week. It agreed to leaflet in Great Yarmouth this Saturday from 1pm.

A Muslim speaker told the meeting how there had been incidents and attacks on the small mosque there.

SUTR North East and Newcastle Unites have called a counter-demonstration in Newcastle city centre this Saturday against the Frontline Patriots (former EDL) demonstration calling for a ban on the burqa.

It assembles at 11.30am at Newcastle Monument.

SUTR members in Hackney, east London, had a stall at a local Labour Party meeting on Citizenship in a Hostile Environment last week.

It discussed the impact of the attacks on the Windrush Generation and other groups.

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Exploring the legacy of 1968 in the theatre

David Edgar asks if a rightward shift was inevitable for the generation that rose up against the Vietnam War

IN THE early 80s, I wrote an epic play called *Maydays*, about a young man who was inspired by the world youth uprising against the Vietnam War.

He joined a revolutionary party, became disillusioned, and ended up on the Thatcherite right.

In moving from youthful idealism to reactionary middle age, he followed generations of former socialists and communists who'd undertaken the same journey.

I was 20 in 1968, the height of the youth revolt—and I used to joke that I'd written a play asking why people flip rightwards to stop it happening to me.

In the 1960s, we were told never to trust anyone over 30 years old.

Was turning right an inevitable consequence of the onset of middle age, and its accompanying responsibilities, from marriages to mortgages?

Or was there something about the experience of being on the revolutionary left which drove people rightwards?

In a classic 1950 work of defecation literature, *The God That Failed*, former Communist Stephen Spender complained of being required to spurn the very pity, compassion and idealism which

BACK STORY

Playwright David Edgar has enjoyed a career spanning five decades

● He has had more than sixty of his plays published and performed on stage

● But his latest, *Trying It On*, is his first performance role

● Many of the productions centre on political themes

● Edgar is a leading member of the Writers' Guild of Great Britain—the trade union for professional writers

brought him to the revolutionary left.

What he didn't say was that those who defect on those grounds tend to hang on to the very cynicism and ruthlessness they left the left to get away from.

Some 35 years on, on the 50th anniversary of 1968, it seemed a good time to revisit *Maydays* and its theme.

Two further questions had emerged in the interim. One was personal—what had happened to my politics in the intervening years?

The other was political—why had my generation, in such large numbers, moved to the populist right, in Britain and across the West?

And how could the Sergeant Pepper generation have turned its back on the social and cultural gains of its youth, in favour of a rose-tinted version of its 1950s childhood?

Luckily, I had the chance to explore all three questions.

I convinced the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), which had premiered *Maydays* in 1983, that 2018 would be a great time to revive the play.

The new version draws the parallels between Margaret Thatcher's authoritarian populism and the right today.

Warwick Arts Centre also commissioned me to write and perform



THE CAST rehearsing for *Maydays* (above), written by David Edgar (below)

PICTURES: RICHARD LAKOS



a touring solo show. In this my 70 year old self debates with my 20 year old self about whether I still retained the politics of my youth. They also argue about what has happened to my generation in the interim.

In the intervening decades a significant cohort of that generation had shifted significantly. Many moved from the revolutionary left to cheerleading the invasion of Iraq.

Commentators Christopher and Peter Hitchens were both International Socialists in the 1970s. However, they returned to the militarism and social-conservatism of their childhoods, though Peter Hitchens opposed the Iraq War.

During the same period, the left has made significant gains in its

social agenda. Women gained the right to take out mortgages and to sit on juries, as well as moves toward equal pay, easier divorce and easier access to abortions.

Race relations, equality and hate crime legislation protected ethnic minorities from some of the overt racism of the 1950s and 1960s.

But while the left was winning important battles in the culture wars, the Labour Party was abandoning its traditional constituency.

The rich grew richer and the majority suffered declining real wages, masked by fiscal mechanisms like tax credits and the mushrooming of personal debt.

Confident that the working class had nowhere else to go, Labour

failed to predict the rise of the populist right.

A decade on from a financial crash which should have persuaded its victims to move left, the right has taken advantage of neoliberalism's collapse. Populist parties have ditched free market economics in favour of interventionism.

Important

Maydays tries to show how people abandon the left for tradition, authority and hierarchy. Conversely, my solo show *Trying It On* attempts to remind people why the left is so important.

One of the best movements I've ever been involved in was the Anti Nazi League, which saw off the neofascist National Front in the late 1970s.

We should be encouraged that Labour's left wing manifesto added three and half million votes to the party's tally at the last general election. But we must also be aware of the pressing dangers of racism and reaction across Europe and beyond.

As when it challenged imperialism and social conservatism in the 1960s, the left has a vital job to do.

Maydays opens at the RSC's Other Place theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon between 27 September and 20 October.

Trying It On will be performed by David Edgar at the Midlands Art Centre on 12 October, alongside *Maydays* at the Other Place 18-20 October and at the Royal Court Theatre, London 24-27 October



Capturing the spirit of the period in the play *Maydays*

IN BRIEF

Strike threat wins a pay rise at Luton

A THREAT of strikes has won a pay rise for outsourced workers at Luton Airport.

It affects baggage handlers, check-in staff, passenger service assistants and security staff employed by Menzies Aviation.

They have won a 5 percent increase backdated to October 2017 and a rise of 3.75 percent or the increase in the retail price index (RPI)—whichever is higher—from January 2019.

And workers will get an extra £1 per hour for unsociable hours.

The possibility of strikes scared the bosses. Walking out could have won more.

Action ballots start at 12 Welsh colleges

UCU UNION members in 12 Welsh colleges have begun balloting for strikes over pay.

College unions put in a claim for a 7.5 percent pay rise or £1,500. But bosses offered just 1 percent.

Workers in the Uca union are also balloting workers at the 12 colleges. The NASUWT, Unison, GMB and NEU unions are set to consult their members on action.

UCU union members across 110 colleges in England and 147 universities are also balloting for pay strikes.

Left challenge in UCU union election

ELECTIONS TO the UCU union's national executive committee were set to end on Friday of this week.

The UCU Left, which Socialist Worker supports, is backing Naina Kent for the equality black members' seat.

If elected she pledges to campaign to involve more black members in the union and give confidence to workers to challenge racism and fascism.

Have these cheque workers cashed in?

WORKERS WHO produce cheques and cheque books have resolved a pay dispute.

Unite union members at Communisist voted to strike over the bosses' pay offer of an 8 percent increase over three years.

Some 79 workers planned to strike every Monday and Tuesday for seven weeks—but called off the action for talks.

Workers at the Crewe factory have now voted to accept the improved offer of 3 percent for each of the next three years.

Scottish teachers are ready for battle

THE EIS Scottish teachers' union has formally rejected a 3 percent pay offer.

A national demonstration for the 10 percent claim is set for Glasgow on 27 October.

ANTI-NUCLEAR



AROUND 1,000 people protested at the Faslane nuclear base in Scotland last weekend against Trident missiles. Campaigners demanded, "Nae Nukes Anywhere"

PICTURE: NEIL TERRY

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Care strikers demand answers from Labour

by SARAH BATES

BIRMINGHAM CARE workers kicked off their latest five-day strike this week by lobbying the Labour Party conference.

Over 270 Unison union members are fighting an onslaught of attacks from Birmingham City Council (BCC), which is Labour-run.

The council is trying to impose a redundancy programme alongside forcing the low-paid workers—who are mostly women—onto part time hours.

BCC says it needs to save money, but the attacks will mean many workers—who provide a vital social service—will be plunged into poverty.

Home worker Caron said, "I lost my partner two years ago so I'm the only one bringing in money to pay the bills.

"The thought of losing hours is stressing me out."

The council's plan to slash



Carers on strike

£2 million from the home enablement service will mean more care packages tendered out to the private sector.

But many working in the council-run service have decades of experience and qualifications, meaning the best-quality care is given to some of the most vulnerable in society.

Private care companies are run on a different model, with workers paid less, trained to a

lower standard, and forced to visit more clients.

Sharon, a care worker, said the cuts were already biting. "I've had to cut down on socialising, and sometimes even food, because I don't know what the future holds."

Unison general secretary Dave Prentis said, "While local councils have undoubtedly been hit by government cuts, councillors have made the wrong decision here."

Many care strikers are Labour voters. They are furious that a Labour council is threatening their jobs, and a service that provides for all the people of Birmingham.

Solid strikes over nine months have shown BCC bosses that a well organised workforce is prepared to take them on.

More action will be needed to finish off their destructive plans for good.

●Send messages of support to info@birminghamunison.co.uk

EQUAL PAY

Massive vote in Glasgow for strikes over equality

A HUGE vote for strikes in Glasgow could see schools and council services shut. Workers are fighting a discriminatory pay structure that saw women paid less than men.

School support staff voted by 90 percent to strike, and cleaning, care and catering workers in Cordia returned a result of 99 percent for action.

Unison steward Denise Phillips told Socialist Worker the result was "absolutely

brilliant. That's 5,000 workers in Unison all out together."

Workers are 12 years into a battle to get their jobs regraded and to receive a lump sum for years of an unfair pay system.

When Glasgow City Council walked away from negotiations in August, they decided to act.

Denise said the council is "dragging its heels, and women have had enough."

Strike dates are yet to be announced.

CAMDEN

No waiting for pay justice

OVER 120 traffic wardens in Camden, north London, are set to start a five-day strike over pay from Monday.

The Unison union members had to suspend earlier action due to the Tory anti-trade union laws.

The wardens—known as Civil Enforcement Officers—are striking for a new basic hourly rate of £11.15.

Strikes in 2015 won them a three-year deal of 25p above the London Living Wage (LLW), and they are paid £10 an hour.

Workers are outsourced from Camden Council to NSL. And there's big money involved—Camden Council made £26 million profit from its parking services in 2017.

The LLW is supposed to be set at a rate to allow people to live and work in London.

But Camden Unison says high living costs mean the workers deserve more.

●Messages of support to unison@camden.gov.uk Visit the picket line—Camden Car Pound, Regis Road, NW5 3EW

GRIMETHORPE

UNISON MEMBERS at Ladywood Primary School are serving up a portion of resistance to redundancy plans.

Some 20 Unison union members were set to strike on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of this week.

It follows three days of action at the school in Grimethorpe, South Yorkshire.

School management decided to sack all nine School Meals Supervisory Assistants (dinner ladies) who look after 200 children at lunch time.

They want teaching assistants to do the job.

Some 94 percent of eligible members voted for strikes on a 90 percent turnout.

The school is asking teachers to supervise children when strikes take place. The NEU and NASUWT union reps have refused to do this.

The pickets welcome support at any time from 6am to 3pm.

●Send messages of support to branchoffice@unisonbarnsleylg.org **George Arthur**

KIRKLEES

Bins strike put on hold

PLANNED STRIKES at Kirklees council in West Yorkshire have been suspended for talks.

Bin workers were due to walk out over failures by management to implement an agreement reached after strikes in July. The Unison union members were due to start an indefinite strike on 1 October.

The union was set to meet management through the joint secretaries on 26 September. Workers feel strongly that this is the council's last chance to settle their grievances.

Nick Ruff, Unison union branch chair (pc)

OBITUARY

Norah Rushton 1929-2018

IT IS with deep sadness that we have to inform comrades of the death of Norah Rushton.

Norah was born in 1929 in Merseyside. Her dad, an active trade unionist, taught Norah what "scab" meant at an early age. In the hungry 1930s Norah's dad spent time at home looking after Norah after his hours at work had been slashed.

Norah's mum would be out organising on the estate to stop people being evicted.

While young Norah had longed to become an actor. But the financial cost meant her dream was put on hold.

In 1948 she started work at the Stork factory, part of the



Norah Rushton as Medea

giant Lever Brothers empire. Norah began organising against the poor working conditions.

Norah was accused of being a sympathiser of the Communist Party (CP) and

was sacked. Norah wasn't a member but joined shortly afterwards.

She organised a campaign against her victimisation and won her job back.

In 1949 Norah joined the left wing Merseyside Unity Theatre. The theatre had performed around the country raising money for medical aid during the Spanish Civil War.

They used songs and plays to tell working class history and performed the classics from different angles.

Norah married Stan, a fellow Communist Party member, in 1953 and had two sons.

Norah and Stan left the CP in 1956 after the "socialist" regimes crushed the Hungarian workers' revolution.

Norah went back to college in 1981 as a mature student and read books by Tony Cliff and Chris Harman.

She left the Labour Party and joined the Socialist Workers Party after the Labour leadership betrayal of the Miners' Strike.

She was active in fighting attacks on abortion rights.

Norah was a class fighter and a wonderful warm and engaging human being.

She made new members of our branch especially welcome and valued their contributions.

Our thoughts are with Norah's sons Steve, Phil and family. Phil has set up a Facebook page "Norah Molyneux Rushton" celebrating Norah's life.

Liverpool SWP

HEALTH SERVICE

Strikes keep up pressure against NHS outsourcing

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

HEALTH WORKERS across Kent began a five-day strike against a dangerous new form of privatisation on Monday.

The 100 Unite union members at East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust are fighting plans to outsource their jobs.

And around 500 Unite members at York Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust were set to walk out for 48 hours on Friday.

Hospital bosses want to set up a wholly-owned subsidiary to run the estates and facilities department.

Their action came after the official NHS Improvement body called on hospital bosses to “pause” plans to set up new wholly-owned subsidiaries. The regulator said it would issue new guidance next month.

It is a sign of the growing pressure on hospital bosses after a series of successful strikes over outsourcing in Wigan.

But the situation in Kent and York shows that workers cannot rely on NHS Improvement.

Bosses at both trusts are ploughing on regardless of the guidance.

Unite regional officer Michael Cott said, “Talks with the East Kent trust management ended with the trust saying it was still going ahead with the transfer.

“That’s despite being made aware of NHS Improvement’s pause edict.”

Unions should ballot for strikes wherever bosses are threatening to



HUNDREDS OF people joined a march to save the women’s hospital in Liverpool last Saturday

set up wholly-owned subsidiaries. Bosses at Chesterfield Royal Hospital said they were “seeking advice” and would “update people as soon as we have the full facts and details”.

Unison union members at the hospital have already backed industrial action in a consultation.

Ballot

The union should now ballot members for strikes to ramp up the pressure on bosses to drop the plans altogether.

The real aim was shown at the Royal Bolton Hospital where its wholly-owned subsidiary iFM refused

to implement the NHS pay deal. While the trust remains the sole shareholder, wholly-owned subsidiaries allow bosses to undermine wages, terms and conditions. Reducing the wage bill makes it a bridgehead for full-blown privatisation.

Unison union members have rejected the pay offer and voted for strikes by 97 percent. They plan a 48-hour strike from 11 October.

Every trade unionist and health campaigner must build solidarity for these crucial fights. And the leaders of the health unions should coordinate action nationally to roll back the tide of privatisation in the NHS.

PAY OFFER

Time to reopen dodgy pay deal

ANGER OVER pay was expected to erupt at the Royal College of Nursing’s (RCN) emergency general meeting (EGM) in Birmingham on Friday.

RCN general secretary Janet Davies stepped down at the end of August after union leaders misled members on a shoddy pay deal.

If a vote of no confidence passes at the EGM, the whole leadership of the RCN will resign.

Union leaders claimed that workers would get a 6.5 percent pay rise—3 percent in 2018-19 and 1.7 percent in each of the following two years.

Backdated

This was supposed to be backdated to 1 April and included in health workers’ pay packets at the end of August.

But hundreds of workers who have not reached the top of their pay bands will receive the pay rise in two stages and lose out on thousands of pounds.

Unison, the largest health union, was at the forefront of selling the deal. General secretary Dave Prentis and the rest of the union apparatus should admit their role and reopen the deal.

DELIVERY WORKERS

Couriers block roads

OVER 100 Uber Eats couriers blocked roads in London to protest against a significant pay cut.

The couriers, riding scooters, bikes and motorbikes, chanted, “No money, no food” as they shut down traffic outside Uber Eats’ London headquarters last Wednesday and Thursday and again on Monday.

The minimum delivery guarantee per food delivery used to be £4.26. Now, under the new system, some orders are being paid at rates as low as £2.62. The IWW and IWGB union members’ demands include a flat minimum rate of £5 a drop and a £1 per mile distance payment.

The action follows strikes by Uber in Glasgow earlier this month. Uber Eats riders also staged a solidarity strike in Plymouth last week.

RESTAURANTS

A platter of joint action

WORKERS AT branches of the Wetherspoon pub chain, TGI Fridays restaurant and McDonalds are all set to strike on Thursday of next week.

Bfawu union members at Wetherspoon and McDonalds are striking for a £10 an hour living wage.

And Unite union members at TGI Fridays are fighting a change in tipping policy that sees 40 percent of waiters’ tips given to kitchen staff.

Incorporating £10 an hour into their demands could combat bosses’ attempts to divide workers over tips.

The strike will include two Wetherspoon pubs in Brighton and McDonalds in Brixton, Crayford in south London and Cambridge and Watford.

TGI Fridays workers in Milton Keynes, Covent Garden and Stratford in London will also strike.

BUS ROUND-UP

UNITE UNION members on Trentbarton buses in Nottingham struck for the third day to fight a below-inflation pay offer of 2.5 percent. Meanwhile, 400 drivers in a different part of the company are being balloted to join the action.

Richard Buckwell

BUS WORKERS at Arriva London North garages have voted to reject bosses’ below-inflation pay offer in an indicative ballot.

The garages balloted were Wood Green, Stamford Hill, Clapton, Ash Grove, Barking, Tottenham, Enfield, Walworth and Palmers Green.

The union should move to a formal strike ballot.

RAILWAYS

Rail chaos—but Tories support privatisation

THE CHAOS of rail privatisation was laid bare by a new report from regulator Office of Rail and Road (ORR).

Its findings come from an inquiry into a widespread transport meltdown across much of Britain’s rail network in May of this year.

ORR said failures from the Department for Transport led to the “collapse” of services.

Timetable changes were rushed through, meaning hundreds of services were cancelled, delayed or replaced.

Tory privatisation is ultimately to blame.

Northern and Govia Thameslink Railway—which runs Southern, Great

Northern and Thameslink trains—took months to recover.

The problems with the new timetable arose because not enough time was allocated to fixing problems, said ORR.

And Network Rail failed to “take sufficient action to manage the risks or the consequences”.

The report is another blow for the hated Tory transport secretary Chris Grayling.

The crisis of the railways is a result of running it for profit.

To seriously address the chaos of a transport system organised by bosses, the trains need to be brought back into public ownership.

SAFETY

Walkout at Northern

WORKERS ON Northern Rail struck over safety last Saturday.

The RMT union members are part of a battle against driver only operation (DOO) trains. The union has called fresh dates after negotiations broke down last week.

Workers are set to strike on three Saturdays—6, 13, and 20 October. And workers on South West Railway are planning to strike on Friday and Saturday of next week.

TUBE WORKERS on the Picadilly Line were set to hold a 48-hour strike from Wednesday.

RMT union members are fighting over bosses’ health and safety failures and the abuse of policies and procedures.

FOOD AND DRINK WORKERS



GMB UNION members at the Robinson’s (Britvic) drinks firm in Norwich struck for better redundancy terms on Monday. More action is needed.

PICTURE: WENDY SMITH

VICTIMISATION

Defend driver Marcia Carty

METROLINE BOSSES have suspended Unite union member and London bus driver Marcia Carty.

Bosses are refusing to let Rastafarian Carty wear a headscarf in the red, green and gold colours. Unite regional

officer Russ Ball said, “The company acknowledges that Sikhs can wear orange turbans and Muslim men can wear white skull caps.

“So what’s the difference with Marcia wearing Rastafarian colours?”

ROBINSON IS A FASCIST THREAT

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

ANTI-RACISTS WERE set to protest at the retrial of Nazi figurehead Tommy Robinson in London on Thursday this week.

The court case marks the beginning of a series of important tests in the battle against the resurgent forces of the British far right.

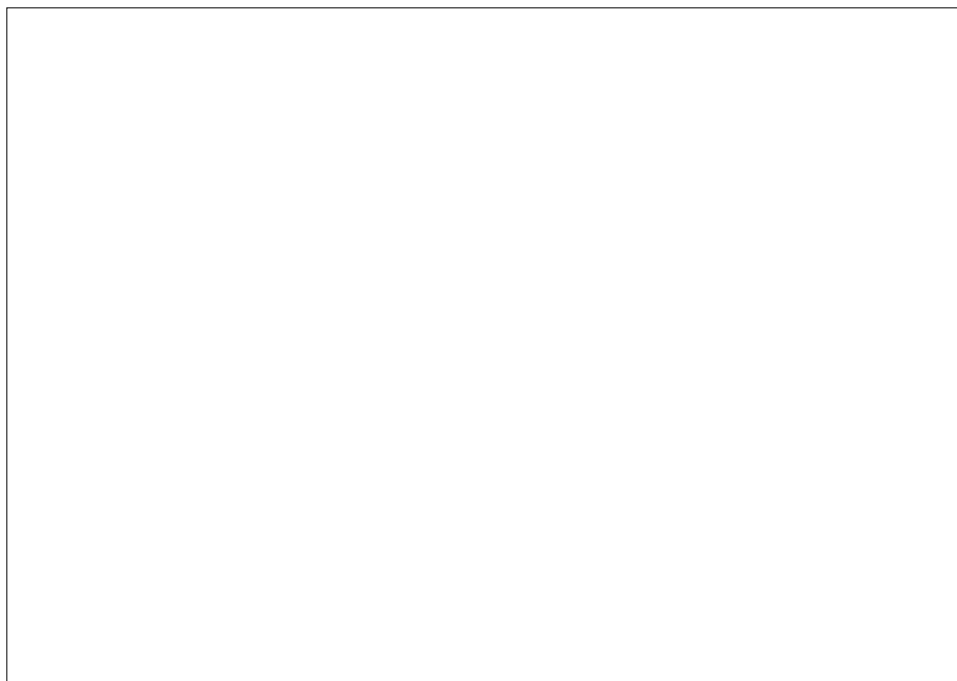
Supporters of Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) and Unite Against Fascism across Britain are gearing up for an autumn of mobilisations to confront the new threat.

Robinson's imprisonment was a lightning rod for the whole of the far right.

He was arrested for filming outside a Leeds court in June and jailed for 13 months. He was trying to use a sexual abuse trial to push the lie that grooming is the preserve of Muslim men.

Whatever the result of the retrial, the far right is likely to use it as an opportunity to mobilise onto the streets.

If Robinson is released, it will boost every fascist and racist in Britain and internationally. US far right



A SUPPORTER of Nazi Robinson at the appeal hearing in August

ideologue Steve Bannon has thrown his weight behind an organisation called The Movement to try and coordinate the European far right.

It includes people such as Italy's racist interior minister Matteo Salvini. He threatened

to deport 500,000 migrants through a "mass cleansing street by street, quarter by quarter" and to draw up a list of Roma people.

Bannon sees Robinson as a central figure in the far right's growth across and Europe.

And leading members of the "Free Tommy" movement—such as adviser Raheem Kassam—are also connected to The Movement.

The SUTR international conference in London on 20 October is a key

opportunity to debate the fightback.

It will bring together anti-racists from the frontline of the fight against fascism, including from Austria and Germany.

The US far right has already thrown tens of thousands of pounds into the previous "Free Tommy" mobilisations in London. It saw 15,000 rally on Whitehall in June.

Mobilise

Supporters of Robinson will want to mobilise large numbers again if he is released.

But if he is not, it doesn't mean the threat has gone away.

His supporters were incensed last week after Robinson revealed that he is facing a further two charges on top of contempt of court.

Different sections of the far right are looking for opportunities to grow out of the "Free Tommy" movement.

And there are growing links between the traditional right, the racist populists of Ukip and the open Nazis.

The Democratic Football Lads Alliance racist street movement has called a

protest in London on 13 October. SUTR and Unite Against Fascism have called a counter-mobilisation.

The Ukip conference in Birmingham was supposed to debate a motion letting Robinson become a member.

Its current rules ban former members of the Nazi British National Party and English Defence League from joining.

Ukip leader Gerard Batten wants him in the party but deferred debate for fear of a backlash among more traditional conservative members.

With the far right in flux, anti-racists have to be alive to possibility the far right trying to use different focal points to mobilise support.

And it's necessary to take on the racism from mainstream politicians.

This makes building the national demonstration against racism and fascism in London on 17 November a key task.

More online

For more on fascism, go to www.socialistworker.co.uk

ANTI-RACISM

Bigots, alt-right bloggers and vicious Islamophobes at Ukip conference

by GUY SMALLMAN in Birmingham

THE ANNUAL Ukip conference in Birmingham saw an organisation of bitter, paranoid ultra-conservatives trying to revive their fortunes by moving yet further to the right.

Despite the recent recruitment of young high profile alt-right media personalities, the age range inside the conference hall remained unchanged from previous years.

Delegates were posh, older and 99 percent white.



Inside Ukip's conference

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

The only one of the new additions to address the conference was Mark Meecham.

Also known as Count Dankula, Meecham is the YouTube "personality" convicted of antisemitic hate crime.

The disgraced former Tory MP Neil Hamilton warmed up the crowd with a childish rant against equality which saw snide attempts at humour.

The keynote speech came from leader Gerard Batten.

There was plenty of self-congratulation combined with the

Islamophobic lies he is well known for.

His policies for segregated Muslim prisons and the scrapping of hate crime legislation push the party into territory previously occupied by the likes of the Nazi British National Party.

His address pretty much set the tone for the rest of the event.

The whole conference was dominated by Islamophobia, racism, sexism, homophobia and climate change denial.

By contrast the noisy demonstration outside organised by Stand Up

To Racism saw a range of speakers from local communities and trade unions take on the bigots.

Several Muslim women took to the microphone to counter the lies that were coming from inside the conference centre—and the platform.

And a local teacher gave an excellent speech about how his workplace was enriched by many languages, religions and races.

The handful of Ukip members who ventured outside to make cringeworthy attempts at heckling were a pitiful sight by comparison.